

**Proceedings of the 7th
World Congress of
African Linguistics, Buea,
17-21 August 2012
VOLUME ONE**



**EDITED BY
Gratien G. Atindogbé &
Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka**

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Proceedings of the 7th World Congress of African Linguistics, Buea, 17-21 August 2012

Volume One

Edited by
Gratien G. Atindogbé &
Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka



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WOCAL Congresses 1994 – 2015

The following short congress profiles summarize key facts from all the WOCAL congresses.

1ST WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

Kwaluseni, Swaziland, July 18th – 22nd 1994

- Location: University of Swaziland
Theme: African Linguistics at the Crossroads
Congress Chairs: Robert K. Herbert & E.C. Lwandle Kunene
Keynotes: Ben O. Elugbe, Bernd Heine, Thomas Hinnebusch, G. Hérault, Mubanga Kashoki, Sam Mchombo, David Odden, Irina Toporova, Anthony Traill
Presentations: 150 (200 announced); Countries of scholars: 34 (21 African countries)
Proceedings: Robert K. Herbert † (ed.) 1997. *African Linguistics at the Crossroads. Papers from Kwaluseni, 1st World Congress of African Linguistics, Swaziland 18 - 22. VII. 1994.* Cologne: Köppe. ISBN 978-3-89645-120-0

2ND WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

Leipzig, Germany, July 27th – August 3rd 1997

- Location: University of Leipzig
Theme: African Languages in the 3rd Millennium
Patron: Prof. Dr. Kurt Biedenkopf, Prime Minister of the Free State of Saxony
Congress Chair: H. Ekkehard Wolff
Keynotes: Ayo Bambose, Mohamed H. Abdulaziz, Kay Williamson, Paul Newman
Presentations: 180 (250 announced); Countries: 39
Proceedings: H. Ekkehard Wolff & Orin Gensler (eds.) 2000. *Proceedings of the 2nd World Congress of African Linguistics Leipzig 1997.* Cologne: Köppe ISBN 978-3-89645-124-8.
Special symposium: Endangered Languages organized by Matthias Brenzinger (DFG)
Proceedings of the symposium: Matthias Brenzinger (ed.) 1998. *Endangered Languages in Africa.* Cologne: Köppe. ISBN 978-3-89645-305-1

3RD WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

Lomé, Togo, August 21st – 26th 2000

Location: Université du Bénin-Lomé, Togo
 Theme: *no Congress theme*
 Patron: Monsieur le Ministre de l'Education Nationale
 et de la Recherche
 Congress Chair: Kézié Kyenzi Lébiakaza
 Keynotes: Bernd Heine, Hounkpati Capo, Karsten Legère,
 Ayo Bambose, Herman M. Batibo
 Presentations: 90 (150 announced); Countries: 29 (17 African
 countries)
 Proceedings: Kézié Kyenzi Lébiakaza † (ed.) 2003. Actes du 3e
 Congrès Mondial de Linguistique Africaine
 Lomé 2000. Cologne: Köppe. ISBN 978-3-
 89645-335-8
 Special
 symposium: Major African Languages organized by Matthias
 Brenzinger (Fritz Thyssen-Foundation)

4TH WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

New Brunswick, USA, June 17th – 22nd 2003

Location: Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA
 Theme: The Description of African Languages in a
 Rapidly Changing Field
 Congress Chair: Akinbiyi Akinlabi
 Keynotes: Larry Hyman, Ben O. Elugbe, H. Ekkehard Wolff
 Presentations: 160 (200 announced); Countries: 22
 Proceedings: Akinbiyi Akinlabi & Oluseye Adesola (eds.)
 2004. *Proceedings of the 4th World Congress of
 African Linguistics New Brunswick 2003.*
 Cologne: Köppe. ISBN 978-3-89645-338-9
 Special
 collaboration: Co-organized together with the 34th Annual
 Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 34)

5TH WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, August 7th – 11th 2006

Location: African Union Conference Center & Addis
 Ababa University
 Theme: The Fate of the African Languages in the World
 of Globalization
 Congress Chair: BAYE Yimam
 Keynotes: Al Mtenga, Bernd Heine, Felix Ameka, Ian
 Maddieson, Rosalie Finlayson.
 Presentations: 90 (130 announced); Countries 23 (14 African
 countries)

SPECIAL 6TH WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

São Paulo, Brasil, August 11th – 15th 2008

Location: Universidade de São Paulo
Theme: Exploring the African Language Connection in Americas
Congress Chair: Margarida Maria Taddoni Petter
Keynotes: Emili Bonvini, Ayo Bamgbose, Sergio Valdes Bernal, Manuel Ndonga, Salikoko Mufwene, Amindo Ngunga
Presentations: 65 (72 announced)
Proceedings: Margarida Maria Taddoni Petter & Ronald Beline Mendes (eds.) 2009. *Proceedings of the Special World Congress of African Linguistics: Exploring the African Language connection in the Americas*. São Paulo: Humanitas. ISBN 9788577321216

6TH WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

Cologne, Germany, August 17th – 21st 2009

Location: University of Cologne
Theme: African linguistics for Understanding and Progress
Congress Chair: Matthias Brenzinger
Keynotes: Neville Alexander, Sam Lutalo, Margarida Petter, Gratién Gualbert Atindogbé, Roland Kiessling
Session: Tucker Childs, Zygmunt Frajzyngier, James
Keynotes: Gordan Bennett, Abdelrahim Hamid Mugaddam, Salikoko Mufwene, Ekkehard Wolff
Special workshop: Special African Sign Language Workshop (Victoria Nyst, Shane Gilchrist, Rezenet Moges, Eyasu Tamene); Nubian Workshop (Anne Storch, Al-Amin Abu-Manga); Tima research unit (Gerrit J. Dimmendaal)
Summer school: Special DAAD summer school on language documentation, organized by Matthias Brenzinger
Presentations: 291 (298 announced), Countries: 64 (36 African countries)
Proceedings: Matthias Brenzinger & Anne-Maria Fehn (eds.) 2012. *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of African Linguistics Cologne 2009*. Cologne: Köppe. ISBN 978-3-89645-199-6

7TH WORLD CONGRESS OF AFRICAN LINGUISTICS

Buea, Cameroon, August 20th – 24th 2012

- Location: University of Buea
- Theme: Language description and documentation for development, education and the preservation of cultural heritage in Africa
- Congress Chair: Pius Tamanji & Gratién Gualbert Atindogbé
- Keynotes: Beban Sammy Chumbow, Jean-Marie Hombert, Rebecca Grollemund, Anne Storch, Goedele de Clerck, Karsten Legère, Maurice Tadadjeu
- Special workshops: Antipassives in African languages, coordinators: Guillaume Segerer & Koen Bostoen
- The history of post-verbal negation in African languages, coordinators: Maud Devos & Dmitri Idiatov
- Sociolinguistic documentation workshop, coordinators: Jeff Good & Tucker Childs
- Presentations: 231 (294 announced), Countries: 42 (22 African countries)
- Proceedings: Gratién G. Atindogbé & Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka (eds.) 2017. *Proceedings of the 7th World Congress of African Linguistics. Buea 2012*. Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG. ISBN: 9956-764-38-8

8TH World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL 8)

Kyoto, Japan, August 21st - 24th 2015

- Location: Kyoto University
- Theme: not specified, all research topics relating to African language studies were welcomed
- Congress Chair: Shigeki Kaji
- Keynotes: Masayoshi Shibatani, Tetsuro Matsuzawa, Yédê Adama Sanogo, Nobutaka Kamei, Tucker Childs
- Special workshops: Workshop 1 (pre-Wocal): Current Trends in Khoisan Linguistics (August 20th, 2015)
- Workshop 2: African Ideophones and their Contribution to Linguistics
- Workshop 3: Areal Phenomena in Northern Sub-Saharan Africa
- Workshop 4: Sign Language and Deaf Education
- Workshop 5: From Home to Home: African Urban Youth Languages in the Diaspora
- Workshop 6: Event Integration Patterns in African Languages

Presentations: 183 (185 announced), Countries: 26 (11 African countries without counting Africans from outside Africa)
 Proceedings: Shigeki Kaji (eds.) 2017. Proceedings of the 8th World Congress of African Linguistics. Kyoto 2015. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa. ISBN: 978-4-86337-233-7 / B233

CONTACT AND INFORMATION ON WOCAL

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More statistics WOCAL-7 Buea

Total number of abstracts received:	294
Total Number of presentations made:	231
Total number of participants invited (including observers):	365
Total number of people who attended:	324

Countries Represented (42)

No.	Country	Number of Abstracts	No.	Country	Number of Abstracts
1.	Australia	(01)	23.	Kenya	(11)
2.	Austria	(02)	24.	Kyoto	(01)
3.	Belgium	(01)	25.	Malawi	(01)
4.	Benin	(05)	26.	Morocco	(03)
5.	Botswana	(03)	27.	Mozambique	(01)
6.	Brasil	(04)	28.	Nigeria	(40)
7.	Cameroon	(71)	29.	Poland	(03)
8.	Canada	(01)	30.	Portugal	(03)
9.	Central Africa	(02)	31.	Russia	(05)
10.	China	(01)	32.	Senegal	(07)
11.	The Congo (B)	(01)	33.	SIL	(18)
12.	D.R. Congo (K)	(02)	34.	South Africa	(07)
13.	Ethiopia	(11)	35.	Sudan	(06)
14.	France	(24)	36.	Sweden	(05)
15.	Gambia	(01)	37.	Tanzania	(03)
16.	Germany	(34)	38.	Tchad	(16)
17.	Ghana	(04)	39.	Togo	(05)
18.	Holland	(09)	40.	Turkey	(01)
19.	Israel	(02)	41.	Uganda	(02)
20.	Italy	(02)	42.	UK	(04)
21.	Ivory Coast	(01)	43.	Unknown	(13)

22.	Japan	(04)	44.	USA	(25)
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Introduction

*Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka & Gratien G. Atindogbé;
University of Buea*

This volume of the Seventh World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL 7) was operated under the major theme “LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION AND DOCUMENTATION FOR DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE”. The broadness and contemporary relevance of this theme activated a wide spectrum of topics that have immensely given an in-depth examination and investigation of some African languages in almost all the linguistic domains and its related disciplines. All the contributions in this volume share the common goals of:

1. Enhancing our understanding of more of the structures of the African languages, developing techniques for describing African languages in diversified perspectives, providing some insights in the challenges that are retarding the development and propagation of African languages and cultures into the educational systems, and

2. Suggesting tracks for the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage related to those languages.

After scrutiny, this collection of 42 peer-reviewed papers has been categorized into nine headings, excluding the plenary paper, on the bases of the topics’ affinity. These categories are: Borrowing, Discourse Analysis, Historical Linguistics, Intercultural Communication, Language Documentation, Language in Education, Morpho-syntax, Phonetics and Phonology, and lastly Sociolinguistics. In each of the above mentioned section of the volume, the authors have provided scholastic evaluations and investigations using contemporary theoretical approaches into issues related to African languages that warrant a read through from any researcher of African linguistics.

The presentations in this volume commence with a plenary paper from H. Ekkehard Wolff, titled, “Language planning and

policy implementation in Africa: whose job, and how to go about it?" This elaborate and taught provoking talk dissects and provides practical solutions to some of the language planning and policy challenges in the African continent today.

In Part two of this book, 'Borrowing', just one paper is included. The paper titled "*La néologie d'emprunt a-t-elle un impact sur le système phonologique et morphologique du baka?*" by Bertille Djoupee, presents the linguistic phenomenon of 'borrowing' as it is attested in the Baka language, a Niger Congo language, spoken in Cameroon, Gabon and Congo-Brazzaville. In this paper the author used five functional domains in the language to justify the phonological and morphological integration of loan sounds and words in the Baka language.

Part three, 'Discourse analysis' contains three papers: "African proverbs and development" (Joseph N. Mfonyam), "Proverbs as evidence of social inequality in Igbo" (Iwuchukwu C. S. Godwin and Roseline Ihuoma Ndimele) and "Elements of information highlighting in Aja (Kwa) texts" (Virginia Beavon-Ham). In this section, the authors used African proverb texts as a genre of language or style in studying language structures. The studies also fully appreciate the linguistic beauty as well as the meaning these texts mediate. In employing different analytical strategies, the authors identified the relative frequencies of use of proverbs in peak vs. non-peak moments in a discourse, brought out subjective linguistic inequality, which translates to social inequality in some discourse genres.

In Part four, 'Historical linguistics', two papers are proposed: "Reduction of noun classes and the emergence of semantic classification in Bafanji (grassfields, Cameroon)" (Cameron Hamm) and "Torona: a disappearing Talodi language of Sudan" (Russell Norton and Thomas kuku Alaki). While the first paper discusses the shift in noun class agreement systems in Bafanji an Eastern Grassfields Bantu language spoken in the North West Region of Cameroon, the second paper is a typological exploration of the methodological challenges involved in the documentation and status identification of speech forms of the Talodi language family of Sudan.

The fifth section, 'Intercultural communication', is made of three papers: "Request, complaint or request-complaint? - speech acts which include the expression of disapproval in two communication cultures of the Cameroonian grassfields" (Doreen Schröter, Britta Neumann and Roland Kießling), "The language of symbols and African communication: the case of Ngemba" (Lydie Christelle Talla Makoudjou) and lastly "*Termes d'adresse et langues camerounaises dans les marchés de Yaoundé*" (Avoa Mebenga Geneviève Sandrine). As the title of this section indicates, the papers have variedly but related approaches to discourse ethnography of communication. It is demonstrated that while context is essential for an effective communication, language pragmatic competence inferences is crucial to the interpretation of the meaning in different speech communities.

Part six, 'Language documentation', contains five papers: "Total immersion as community-geared approach for an efficient revitalisation of endangered languages" (Gabriel D. Djomeni); "When the "wrong" language is being documented: language documentation and language dynamics among the Bakola of Cameroon" (Emmanuel Ngue Um and Daniel Duke); "One language or two? Bom and Kim, two highly endangered South Atlantic "languages" (G. Tucker Childs); "Multiple dialects standardisation in Cameroon: Promoting linguistic rights or language endangerment?" (Blasius Agha-ah Chiatoh and Judith Fonyuy Moye); and lastly "Research on sign languages and deaf/sign communities in sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges of diversity, documentation, revitalization, language planning, and capacity building" (Sam Lutalo-Kiingi, and Goedeke A.M. De Clerck). In this part of the book, different aspects of documentary linguistics have been explored using contemporary frameworks. Some challenges involved in data elicitation and analyses are discussed.

The seventh section of this volume, 'Language in education' comprises five papers. These include: "*Que faire à l'école avec les langues africaines?*" (Henry Tourneux et HadidjaKonai); "*Silt'e as a medium of instruction*" (Hussein Mohammed Musa); "*Langues et insertion des communautés ethnolinguistiques*

minoritaires dans les institutions publiques camerounaises : cas de quatre ministères situées dans la ville de Yaoundé au Cameroun” (Julia Messina Ndibnu); *“Les défis inhérents à l’intellectualisation des langues africaines : le cas d’une langue Camerounaise, le Yambetta”* (Maxime Yves Julien Manifi Abouh) and lastly *“Moroccans’ attitudes towards the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction”* (Yamina El Kirat El Allame and Karima Belghiti). This part of the book host papers that discuss the different management and integration of the mother tongue educational (MTE) systems of some African countries and the attitudes of these countries towards MTEs.

Part eight, Morpho-syntax, contains eighteen papers, i.e. the majority of the papers of the volume are confined in this section. The discussions range from applications of different theoretical linguistic frameworks in analysing different aspects of the grammar of African languages to simple descriptions of highly under-described languages. The papers in this section include: the *“Ergativity and anti-passive in majang - another look”* (Andreas Joswig); *“Swahili ma-/am- and Mùuré -m: A unified account”* (Sû-tôôg-nooma Kabore and Odile Racine-Issa); *« Formes nominales en polri »* (Wega Simeu); *« Grammaire du Äebot: temps, aspect, mode »* (Beban Sammy Chumbow and Yaphete Madjirade); *“Grammaticalized verbal and nominal forms in Kanuri/Kanembu”* (Doris Löhr and Eva Rothmaler); *“Koorete conditional constructions”* (Lydia Hoeft); *« Le système des classes nominales en senar (une langue senufo du Burkina Faso): analyse et esquisse comparative avec le proto-senufo»* (Traoré Daouda); *“Negation in Buwal: order, form and meaning”* (Melanie Viljoen); *“Focusing in Ngamambo: minimalist approach”* (Sirih- Nagang Nancy Nyindem); *“Pronouns and case marking in Katcha”* (Christine Waag); *“Question reinforcer and question formation in Bakókó”* (Gaston Bessala); *“The noun class system in Mmen: A center Ring Grassfields Bantu language”* (Mirjam Möller); *“Pied-piping, remnant movement and clause structure in Muyang”* (Edmond Biloa); *“The Morpheme gäna in Amharic”* (Delombera Negga); *“Negation in Yukuben (Jukunoid, Benue-Congo)”* (Rose-Juliet Anyanwu); *“Issues in the analysis of verbs serialization in*

Meta?” (Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka); “Modal-aspect complexes in Yoruba, a tenseless language?” (Yun-Hsin Chang and Funmilayo Amos Olorundare); and lastly “The sentence final particles *wé* and *tá* in Ikwere” (Sylvester N. Osu).

In Part nine, Phonetics and Phonology, two papers are proposed. In the first, “The status of nasal consonants in Gbe languages: the case of *saxwɛgbe*”, Joshua T. Ham discusses the status of nasal consonants in the Gbe lects (Niger-Congo family, Kwa group) and uses appropriate examples to justify his recommendation of a hybrid analysis in describing the existing phonemic system for the Gbe lects. In the second paper, “Tone in Western Ejagham (Etung): lexical tone on verbs with the perfective constituent focus suffix”, John R. Watters uses the Lexical Phonology model to account for the surface tones on the set of verb forms that make use of the perfective constituent focus suffix.

The final section of the book is Part ten, Sociolinguistics. Here, two papers are found: “Emotion concepts in Igala language (Nigeria): A view from NSM theory” (Lillian Tokula and Martin Pütz) and ‘Scripticide’ or the killing of Hausa-Ajami writing system in Northern Nigeria and its aftermath” by Dahiru Muhammad Argungu. The works here examine language and its use in the society in different contemporary contexts. More specifically, the authors took into account both the experiential components and the idealized cultural models applied in the understanding of the encoding of some emotionally related concepts. Also, they had a critical assessment of the causes and aftermath of concepts like “linguicide” in most African societies.

Language planning and policy implementation in Africa: whose job, and how to go about it?

H. Ekkehard Wolff, Leipzig University Germany

Language planning in Africa has to take place against the background of several factors, including multilingualism, the colonial legacy, the role of education as an agent of social change, high incidence of illiteracy, and concerns for communication, national integration and development.

Ayo Bamgbose

A. Introductionⁱ

All of us would certainly subscribe to the above statement by Ayo Bamgbose, our revered Nigerian dean of African sociolinguistics. Following Bamgbose's lead, we have come to talk about and advocate "comprehensive language planning", and we usually have some kind of mother tongue-based multilingual policy and its implementation in mind. We tend to imply that this is part of a number of shortcomings and deficits which can be observed in language planning and implementation across much of Africa, namely the lack of:

1. "comprehensive language planning" which merits this label,

2. Clear expressions of political will in favour of the empowerment of African languages, due to post-colonial dependencies,

3. Democratic access to quality education for the "masses", which is blocked due to the effects of "elite closure" in prevailing oligarchic societies which are characterised by a post-colonial class divide,

4. Clear targets which are defined in non-evasive formulations of language policies,

5. Professional competence on the part of “government” as the assumed agent not only for policy formulation, but also for policy implementation.

These and other grievances are sociolinguistic “folklore” among African linguists and have been deplored by us in countless papers and resolutions over the last 50 years. We tend to see these deplored deficiencies as being responsible for a general hesitance with regard to, or total lack of, implementation of language and educational policies, whether we are happy with them or not, even where they only exist on paper.

But, can we really be sure that we know to whom we should address our complaints? I would like to raise a few provocative questions which, obviously, have so far been neglected but deserve, as I argue here, our immediate attention:

1. Where begins and where ends the scientific responsibility of us linguists and sociolinguists?

2. Have we done our job when we have dumped our sociolinguistic analyses and evaluation reports at the doorstep of national governments?

3. Is it enough when we tell “government” what we would like them to do, without telling them how to go about it in order to deliver?

4. And who is the appropriate addressee in “government” – the Head of State, the Cabinet, individual Ministries, and which?

This is the starting point for my presentation, and I will add one more question: If we as linguists would begin to consider a wider responsibility for us to also think about the operational aspects of language policy implementation:

5. Which theoretical approach would be the most likely to assist us in our quest for achieving “comprehensive language planning” and, at the same time, assure its implementation?

My line of argument in this presentation rests on five basic claims. The first claim is that education most of all, both formal and non-formal, provides the high road towards achieving the main targets of “comprehensive language planning” namely to:

1. Make best use of the inherited multilingualism in Africa,
2. Overcome the negative effects of the colonial legacy,
3. Achieve the targeted social change towards “modernization” of society,
4. Reduce or annihilate the still high incidence of illiteracy,
5. Optimize communication, national integration and development.

Under the last point, we would subsume all of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG) of the United Nations, in particular in view of human resource development and poverty alleviation. Note that all of the MDG have a very strong and indispensable educational component which, in the African multilingual context, characteristically implies fundamental issues of the “language question”.

My second basic claim is, therefore, that in essentially multilingual and polyglot societies such as we find across post-colonial Africa, education is intrinsically and irresolvably linked to language. As I have stated elsewhere and have repeated many times (cf., for instance, Wolff 2011): ‘Language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing.’

My third basic claim is that practically all educational systems in place in Africa are underperforming, if not to say, have failed across the board. As my South African colleague on the international team of experts (cf. Alidou et al., 2006), Heugh (2007:52) stated when summarizing the findings of our survey: ‘Most language models used in African education are designed to fail students.’ The main reason for their failure is that they are, most of the time, based on a copy-and-paste strategy which fully or widely copies the educational system and strategies of the former colonial master. As a consequence, Africa is in dire need of educational reforms, in which the language issue will have to play a decisive role, in terms of:

1. Adequate *language policies* based on solid foundations of *sociolinguistic fact finding* in general,

2. The choice of *Media of Instruction* vs. *Subjects of Instruction* in particular,
3. The choice of *additive* or *subtractive* strategies with regard to *Media of Instruction*,
4. Culture-sensitive content of curricula,
5. Professional and controlled, i.e. sustainable *implementation* of the chosen policies and strategies.

These needs have long been recognized and discussed in countless papers on many occasions over the last century, including both the colonial and the post-colonial periods. One of our main concerns, therefore, must be to find an appropriate answer to at least the following three questions:

1. How would tailor-made solutions for optimized educational policies in the various African countries have to be designed which would adequately take into consideration the fundamental character of the language issue?
2. How do we best manage the necessary educational reforms in Africa in full recognition of their linguistic dimension?
3. How do we ensure sustainable implementation once we have settled for the necessary educational reforms in the framework of adequate language policies?

It follows from the above claims and questions raised, that the major reason for the failure of African educational systems must be sought in *wrong language-in-education policies*. While the former colonial powers would run their educational systems at home in a largely monolingual context with the language of education being the mother tongue (L1) of the vast majority of the students, the African situation would require tailor-made solutions to match the sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and socio-political situation that prevails in a given African country. This is particularly true in view of territorial and institutional multilingualism and polyglossia, and of individual and sociocultural patterns of language choice and use, involving both endoglossic and exoglossic languages. *Copy-and-paste* from the model of the ex-colonial power will simply not do for

Africa, as all serious empirical evidence suggests (cf. Ouane and Glanz 2011).

My fourth basic claim is that *Ministries of Education* in Africa are the primordial agents of social change and, therefore, must be made directly responsible for all operational issues regarding educational reforms and their implementation. Based on many years of observation across much of Africa, I have come to the conclusion that African Ministries of Education, for a number of obvious reasons, are simply not equipped to address and manage these tasks. I will, therefore, address this issue in more detail further below.

My fifth claim, finally, is that, as has been shown in the past, it may not be sufficient for us linguists and sociolinguists to stop at our genuine task of providing robust sociolinguistic fact finding as a basis for language policy development and formulation – and then sit back and complain about the lack of political will on the part of African governments, and deplore insufficient and defective implementation of existing language policies by incompetent administrators in the national Ministries of Education. I strongly suggest that the international linguistic community should take it up as one of their academic tasks to also get involved in *the theoretical and methodological aspects of language policy implementation* – and thereby provide the national Ministries of Education (MoE) with the necessary tools and strategies for doing their job and make available to them insights from *organizational theory*.

In the past, we have approached the issue of language planning and implementation in a 3-step model which involved a neat division of labour among (socio-) linguists and decision-makers (cf. Table 1.1).

Step	WHAT?	WHO?	
		Institutions & Human resources	
I	<i>Language Planning:</i> Sociolinguistic Fact Finding	Academically grounded bodies: (universities,	Linguists (sociolinguists), sociologists, educationists,

	➔ Recommendations	academies, NGOs)	etc.
II	<i>Language Policy Formulation</i>	Legislation (Parliament)	Politicians, decision makers
III	<i>Language Policy Implementation</i>	Executive ("Government")	Administrators (in Ministries [of Education])

Table 1.1: Traditional 3-step-model of language planning and implementation

Traditionally, we consider our job as (socio-) linguists done when we have delivered our *recommendations* on the basis of robust *sociolinguistic fact finding* (step I) to political authorities such as bodies in the *legislative*, i.e. parliaments or advisory bodies of parliament. Implicitly we assume that these bodies will finally design the appropriate *language policies*(step II) and carry the matter further into the *executive*, i.e. government, namely the responsible ministry or ministries who will then look into and effectuate the implementation of the policies (step III). As a rule, we as (socio-) linguists have never considered that the progress from step II to step III, and step III itself, should also be our own responsibility, i.e. by following the comprehensive language planning process through until the end – which would be successful and sustainable implementation! I suggest that we review our traditional approach in terms of widening our own responsibility as (socio-) linguists to encompass all three steps of the above model. The tripartite message of this presentation, therefore, is the following:

1. In order to successfully design comprehensive language planning and implement appropriate language policies with regard to multilingual education for purposes of human resource development and poverty alleviation in Africa, what is needed is *professional management* of educational policies.

2. In order to allow professional management of educational policies including successful implementation of

comprehensive language planning and appropriate language policies, administrative authorities in charge need *professional support* from experts in applied sociolinguistic matters, i.e. sociolinguists whose tasks in language planning are not completed with formulations of language policies based on solid sociolinguistic fact-finding, but must include active participation in the successful implementation of such language policies.

3. In order to *professionally assist* responsible government authorities in the implementation process, sociolinguists would be well advised to make use of the potential contributions provided by theoretical modules and strategies offered by “Organizational Theory”, with special reference to “Integrated Social Marketing” and “Controlling”.ⁱⁱ

In order to connect this goal to the five basic claims presented above, academic back up is indispensable – and this is where this audience, i.e. the international African linguistics community of WOCAL, comes in: *Applied African Sociolinguistics* as a new sub-field of *African linguistics* (German: “Afrikanistik”) must find its place in educational programs at the tertiary level across Africa – such as is envisaged by ACALAN’s special Master Program PANMAPAL. Therefore, I would like to enlarge the “message” of this presentation by the following addendum:

If the responsible governmental agencies are not up to the task of both planning and implementing adequate language policies, it is the job of Applied Sociolinguistics to create and organize the necessary academically based back-up for the responsible governmental agencies to perform their duties.

My suggestion is that, across Africa, *Social Marketing Theory* should be included, as a novel approach within applied linguistics, into the training of applied linguists, with regard to the particular problems of language-in-education marketing under the special conditions that prevail – locally and differently – for its operational applications in Africa. Such innovative program is based on a number of axiomatic

assumptions which shall be duly outlined in the 2nd section of this presentation.

The above five claims are based on an understanding of what *Social Marketing* is about. In the 3rd section of the presentation, therefore, I will outline the claims that this particular theory makes regarding philosophy, concepts, strategies and tools, target groups and professional communication, and I will discuss the notion of “controlling” in view of language planning and policy implementation.

In the 4th section, the national *Ministries of Education* (MoE) are identified as the primordial agents of language planning and policy implementation which, in Africa, have eminent repercussions on the social and cultural setup of societies in a way that makes language planning equal social planning and vice versa (cf. below). We need to discuss:

4. Why MoE are neither used to, nor in any way equipped to, handle this task, and
5. What exactly would need to be done to upgrade MoE to this task?

The rationale behind approaching the language-in-education issue in terms of social development with instruments of *Social Marketing* is the following: most African economies and political cultures are considered to be “underdeveloped”, not the least because their societies are characterized by massive social problems, such as:

1. Poverty and illiteracy,
2. Poor sanitation and hygienic standards,
3. HIV/AIDS,
4. Demographic explosion in the absence of efficient family planning,
5. High unemployment,
6. Little vertical social mobility,
7. Crime and juvenile delinquency,
8. Alienation of the new “elites” from the “masses”,
9. And, most of all, poor performances of and within the educational system, such as:

1. Low school intakes,
2. Uneven distribution of girls and boys in schools,
3. Poor standards of teaching,
4. Low motivation of teachers and pupils,
5. High rates of drop-outs and class repeaters,
6. Poor results at final examinations,
7. Low transfer from primary to secondary (and from secondary to tertiary) education,
8. Primary school leavers remaining practically illiterate,
9. School leavers with no or rather low competence in the official language that is used as medium of instruction in school,
10. School leavers with no practical or vocational qualification to make them better farmers, gardeners or craftsmen when they return from school, etc.

In particular *Integrated Social Marketing* claims to offer the philosophy, concepts, strategies and tools to approach these kinds of social problems, and finally effectuate the desired social and cultural change towards sociocultural “modernization” and economic “development”.

II. Language Policies and Educational Reforms – Prerequisite for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development in Africa

More than 20 years after the *World Conference on Education for All* in 1990, and bearing in mind the *Millennium Development Goals for Education* to be met by 2015, one of the greatest challenges for governments in Africa remains the design and implementation of adequate educational policies. This would allow African countries to fully exploit their human resource capital for sustained development and poverty alleviation.

A. The language issue in education

This presentation suggests that the essential prerequisite for the drastic educational reforms needed is the nationwide introduction of *mother tongue-based bi- or trilingual educational systems*ⁱⁱⁱ. This requires that:

1. The mother tongue, or a language that the child is sufficiently familiar with upon school entry, be, ideally, maintained as the medium of instruction minimally throughout the first educational cycle, i.e. that any bilingual MoI-strategy must be *additive* (rather than *subtractive*).

2. The official, often foreign or ex-colonial, language is introduced as a subject at some point in the curriculum and only supported by sound foreign language (L3) pedagogy. However and particularly during the primary cycle, it should *never be used as MoI* beyond a margin of 50% in order to guarantee a minimum use of 50% of mother tongue MoI minimally throughout the primary cycle.

3. A *national language of wider communication*– possibly a cross-border inter-African language– may be introduced as an additional language (L2, taught as subject of instruction) if there is a demand.

Obviously, educational reforms which aim at poverty alleviation and sustainable development in Africa have to be concerned with the empowerment not only of the indigenous African languages that will be used throughout all educational cycles, but also with the empowerment of the people who speak these languages. This is where and why *linguistic planning and engineering equals social planning and engineering* (cf. section 4).

Such fundamental educational reforms that we here speak about would require not only a high degree of professional communication skills on the part of the primordial agency, i.e. the Ministry of Education as “lead agency”, but also a shared vision, based on a strong corporate identity. It is my assumption and claim that ministries in Africa generally lack the required communication and networking skills.

In addition to communication problems within ministries, and lacking commitment to a shared vision, there are also too few adequate external communication strategies available.

Further, government and its ministries as lead agencies for education and social change require successful advocacy of the relevant policies and the necessary transparency of decision making, which must involve all stakeholders, each group with its specific needs and aspirations.

In order to overcome the failures of the received ex-colonial African educational systems, we need to do more than just to review:

1. Educational policies in terms of languages used as *media* and as *subjects* of instruction,
2. Content of teaching,
3. Appropriateness of teacher training,
4. Production of teaching materials,
5. Involvement of parents and the local communities in at least primary education.

We must also recognize and eliminate inefficient bureaucracy, mediocrity and lack of professionalism on the part of the relevant agencies of educational reforms. In other words, we must insist on *capacity building* and *professionalism* at the level of the national ministries responsible for education and related authorities.

This paper, therefore, suggests a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to applied sociolinguistic research targeting the successful implementation of educational reforms in the different conditions which prevail in African countries. The approach which is recognized in the relevant literature as *Integrated Social Marketing* (ISM), offers theoretical analyses of the prerequisites and mechanisms for reforms, and provides efficient methodological tools for achieving them.

B. What is “Integrated Social Marketing”, and how does it relate to language and educational policies?

On the simplest level of definition and for our purpose, *Integrated Social Marketing* means adopting and adapting the techniques which were originally developed for commercial marketing, for the purpose of professionalizing the management of education. Social Marketing starts from the

assumption that social problems (for instance, those concerning education, sanitation and health care, pollution of environment, juvenile delinquency etc.) can be solved more efficiently by using marketing tools. Social Marketing, therefore, has been defined as: ‘...planning, organization, implementation and control of marketing strategies and activities of non-commercial organizations, which directly or indirectly aim at solutions to social tasks.’ (Bruhn and Tilmes, 1994:23; translation HEW). Bruhn and Tilmes go on to note that there are:

...two different perspectives within Social Marketing: the institutional and the problem-driven perspectives. The former, as the name implies, looks at the realization of social goals from the perspective of a particular institution. Thus, we increasingly observe social marketing for hospitals, political parties, museums, theatres, etc. The latter focuses on what techniques, methods and tools can be used for solving social problems. (Bruhn/Tilmes, 1994: 22; translation HEW).

In relation to education, social marketing under the *problem-driven perspective* would target development and poverty alleviation, for example, as social goals, and would develop strategies (including the organization of a network of social institutions and organizations, governmental and non-governmental) for meeting these targets. One of the social “products” to be marketed would be “mother tongue-based multilingual universal education”. Under the *institutional perspective*, it would focus on the role of national education ministries. A high degree of professionalism and competence would be required for ministerial managers to function efficiently and effectively under the regime of what is called the management cycle, which includes, for example, a dynamic planning and implementation process, involving activities as given in Figure 1.1.

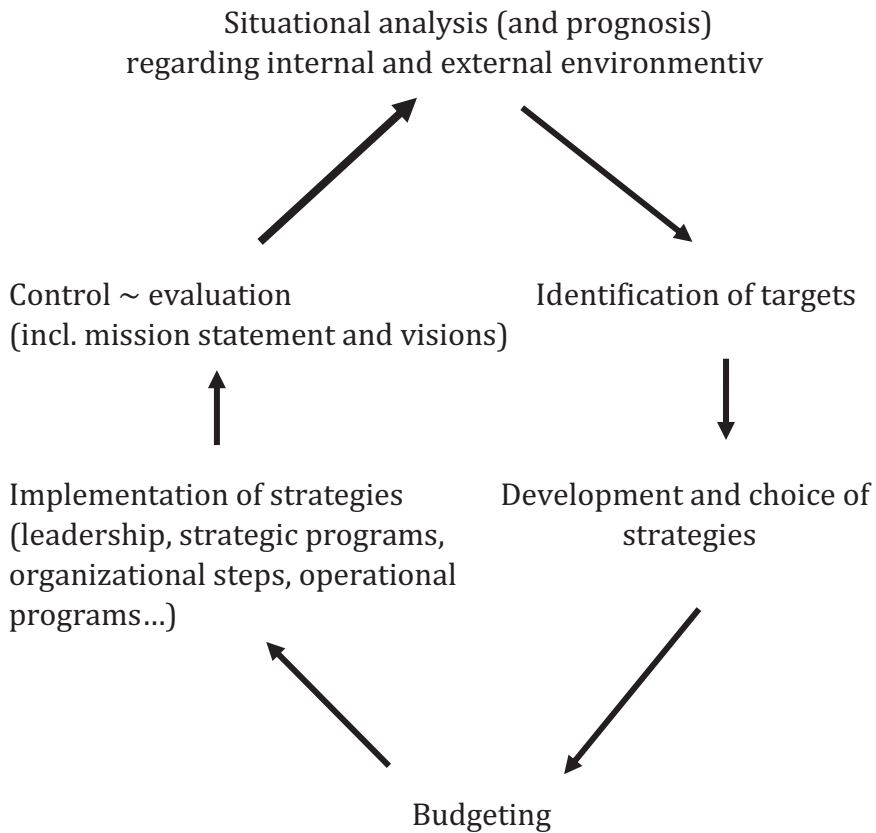


Figure 1.1: The Management Cycle

“Marketing” in this context refers to a comprehensive *leadership concept* for non-commercial organisations. It has little, if anything, to do with market-driven forces that characterise the commercial sector. Despite the fact that the terminology has largely been borrowed from the commercial sector, *Integrated Social Marketing* refers to the *optimised management of social ideas*; that is, addressing social problems and aiming for social goals to effect social change. Therefore, it bears little, if any, resemblance to commercial advertising which would be the layperson’s immediate association when s/he hears the term “marketing”.

Applying Integrated Social Marketing Theory to Problem-Solving with Regard to Language Planning and Educational Reforms in Africa

As has been argued already on previous occasions (Wolff 2004, 2006), *Integrated Social Marketing* can be profitably applied to the professional management of educational reforms for the purposes of human resource development and poverty alleviation in Africa. These educational reforms must be based on the design and successful implementation of comprehensive language planning in general, and language-in-education policies in particular. For example, the *Academy of African Languages* (ACALAN),^v based in Mali, since 2007 has envisaged a special Masters and PhD Program on Applied African Linguistics (PANMAPAL), which could be introduced into tertiary education throughout Africa to provide an academic basis for training the much needed experts in languages policy development and implementation. Such a program should incorporate *Integrated Social Marketing* theory with the particular focus on language-in-education management in Africa.

A. Language planning is social planning

At the interface between (socio-) linguistics, education science, and “development theory”/“modernization theory” in the classic social sciences, there is considerable ignorance and confusion with regard to the as yet poorly understood interrelationship between LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, and DEVELOPMENT in the wider framework of “development communication” (cf. Wolff 2012). This is depicted in the “Development Communication Triangle”, cf. Fig. 1.2.

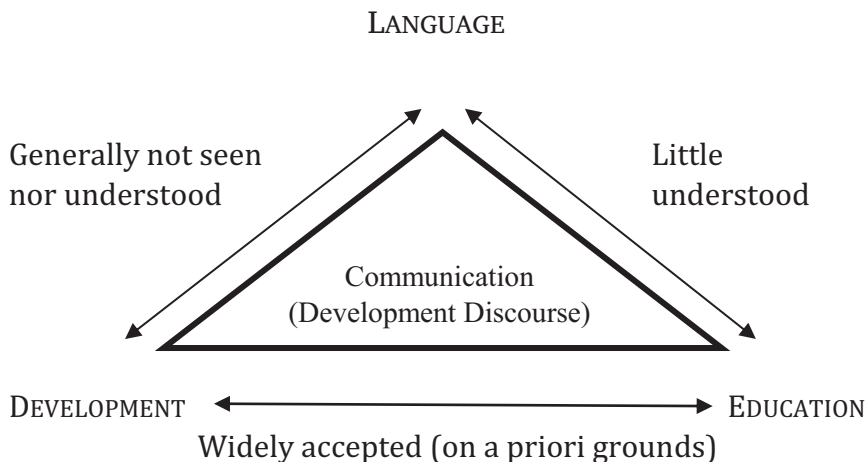


Fig. 2: The Development Communication Triangle (Wolff 2012)

The need for tertiary education programs such as ACALAN's PANMAPAL, dealing with integrated Language Planning and Educational Planning, is indicated by the following considerations:

1. Optimal mother tongue-based multilingual education involves language planning, in particular in the African multilingual context.
2. Language planning is both strategic and operational planning; it involves fact-finding, policy development (to feed into governmental decision making), implementation and evaluation ("controlling").
3. Language planning and education planning are both part of social planning; the common target is to effect social and cultural change (sometimes referred to as "modernisation" of society and often implicit in [economic] "development").
4. Language planning, particularly language planning for education, provides the fundamental prerequisites for individual, social, cultural, economic and political development, poverty alleviation and the promotion of human rights.

5. Putting multilingual *Education for All* into practice, based on professional language planning and the professional execution of appropriate language and educational policies, can profit from applying the theoretical framework of *Social Marketing*.

Integrated Social Marketing in particular is about communicating social ideas which are needed in order to create the social setting for a “dynamic multi-stakeholder partnership” (Adama Samassekou) which would enhance the prospects of successfully implementing a new policy, for instance, in education.

It is understood that all *management tasks*, including those under the Social Marketing approach, must involve *controlling*. While marketing as such is a leadership concept, controlling is a tool for leadership support. Note that “controlling” in *Social Marketing* theory has little or nothing to do with control in the ordinary sense of the word but is a tool for ensuring sustainability of action. Another and more familiar notion would be stringent and critical “project evaluation” as part of a management cycle (cf. Figure 1) which, as a whole, targets permanent optimisation of performance.

Managing, or marketing, multilingual education would involve a set of interrelated policies, such as:

1. Target-group policy,
2. Communication policy,
3. Distributional policy,
4. Economic policy, etc.

In Africa in particular, any *Social Marketing* must be culture-sensitive and be based on solid research with regard to the historical and socio-cultural idiosyncrasies of each country. One of the central issues of education is the empowerment of the disempowered, with reference to both languages and their speakers, which necessitates sensitivity, transparency, and accountability with regard to all involved actors. Inadequate and unprofessional handling of power issues will result in

failure; it has done so in the past leading to social strife and, in the worst scenario, to civil war.

B. Ministries of Education as agents for social change

Education for All is a primordial social-marketing task that targets the better performance of educational systems. The responsible agency to address this task is, by nature so-to-speak, the national Ministry of Education.

Accordingly, also the task of managing education lies with the national Ministries of Education, which, as a rule, are not adequately equipped to handle this task, neither effectively nor efficiently. In order to provide ministries with suggestions and concepts of how to improve their performance, the following thoughts and arguments may be found helpful.

Since Ministries of Education are the central agencies for managing and, thereby, “marketing” educational policies, they must, first of all, accept that – quite contrary to uninformed preconceptions – management and marketing are legitimate tasks, and are indeed feasible, for governmental organisations such as Ministries. Further, they should be able to answer questions pertaining to “visions” as, for instance: *What can the Ministry of Education contribute to the country and society in terms of modernisation, development, and poverty alleviation?*

On the one hand, social marketing for education requires high levels of professionalism and special management/marketing competencies (cf. Figure 1.3. further below). On the other hand, Ministries of Education tend to share peculiar deficiencies which all bureaucratic organisations appear to share with regard to:

1. Unprofessional management and marketing,
2. Ineffective information flow and organisational structure,
3. Inadequate staff qualifications and requirements.

The point that I am making here is that, in order to fulfil the full range of their tasks, the Ministries would have to be more professional with regard to *Social Marketing* issues.

If one takes Ministries of Education serious in their function as agents of educational reforms based on comprehensive

language planning, one has to acknowledge that they face a set of particular problems. These problems are due to the negative attitudes towards engineering social change (“modernisation”) through formal education, and they involve:

1. Internal resistance to rigid professional management with regard to marketing and controlling;
2. External negative responses from people who belong to different layers of society, or generations, with different social and cultural backgrounds.

Further, Ministries of Education face particular marketing problems due to the inherent long-term nature of educational action, as opposed to the rather short-term effects in commercial and political marketing. Educational reforms have long-term turnover effects, i.e. we are talking about 20 or 30 year cycles before we see educational reforms pay off, for instance, in the professional careers of the first cohorts of students who have undergone the educational reforms already in their primary and secondary educational cycles.

In general, there is no reason for public and governmental institutions being exempted from the requirements of professionalism and management competence. Like private institutions, they must have a philosophy (or “vision”) and a mission. They need to have precise information on their role in a specific environment, and be able to narrowly define targets and to develop strategies to achieve them. Further, they need to implement control mechanisms that would feed back into fact finding and, if necessary, lead to a re-orientation of targets and strategies. All this is part of marketing. Modern marketing is nothing but a professional management philosophy that aims at optimising the functional processes in which the organisation is involved.

Who would agree if one said that African national Ministries of Education are already characterised by such kind of professional management philosophy?

III. The Challenge: Language Planning as Social Planning

It is not generally accepted that professional management which involves marketing and controlling, is necessary in social planning, including educational planning. This is somewhat surprising, since in terms of budget size and staff numbers, the institutions involved – ministries and other governmental agencies, and even some NGOs – are on a par with medium-sized commercial enterprises. Even though education is less concerned with “hard products” (i.e. material and storable goods) than with “soft products” (immaterial and non-storable goods), the need for management, marketing and controlling is still there, particularly in service management. And “service management” is what we should be able to expect from national ministries.

Service management faces a set of particular problems relating to the soft nature of its products, such as *good training, successful education, adequate curricula, stakeholder involvement, increased creative potential and motivation* of teachers and pupils. These, as a rule, do not attract the attention of the media, who are more concerned with quantities of “hard products”, like the number of classrooms built and books printed number of teachers trained, and percentages of female enrolment. A new educational policy cannot be considered as being successfully marketed only because it is portrayed by the media as being widely accepted by the public – particularly in the context of a press which, in a number of African countries, may not be free at all. Rather, it takes many years before it can be established that a policy has been implemented successfully: several cohorts of pupils and students need to be seen and accepted as being noticeably “better educated” in terms of immediate results that can be measured, such as careers in the job market, which could be unequivocally linked to the new policy.

A. The Institutional Perspective of Integrated Social Marketing

The last two to three decades have witnessed interesting attempts to enlarge the scope of marketing science to encompass non-commercial problems and organizations through *Integrated Social Marketing*. It must be said, however,

that many, if not most, central issues of social marketing have not been satisfactorily addressed, let alone solved (see Bruhn/Tilmes, 1994:230).

Introducing professional marketing into the agenda of a governmental institution such as MoE in Africa, may meet with considerable scepticism. In our traditional bipartite conception of government and public administration on the one hand, and economy and market activities on the other, there appears to be little room – at first sight – for introducing conceptual adaptations from the economic and market sector into the routines of government and administration. This may be one of several reasons why governments and administrations perform rather poorly at times. Nevertheless, MoE do in fact already use marketing concepts, or at least certain elements of marketing:

1. The media, often under government control anyway, are used as amplifiers for communication between government and the public, and even with donors;

2. Some of the target groups are identified as beneficiaries of occasional special actions, such as special programs run for in- and out-of-service training of teachers and administrators, curriculum development, piloting experimental approaches to basic education, etc.;

3. Certain results of piloting studies, and changes in certain curricula, are being generally implemented, while others are not.

These are all marketing elements and part of the MoE communication with its environment where it occurs, if at all.

As a rule, however, one would presume that, in such cases, we are dealing with *ad hoc* and rather intuitive marketing. In other words, most of the time there will be no marketing-oriented communication, but simply top-down decrees or no communication at all. What is needed, however, is long-term and systematic strategic communication, which involves long-term and systematic planning. There are obvious shortcomings of *ad hoc* and intuitive marketing activities, namely:

1. It has no long-term developmental perspective, but is rather geared towards immediate solutions to problems as they arise – more like doing running repairs.

2. It is not concerned with internal communication with regard to the targets within the various sections of the MoE and to all staff involved in the particular activities; they are addressed mainly through external communication, i.e. possibly by the press.

3. That means, that most staff members are neither participating in identifying the targets nor are the targets made explicit to them, even though their administrative performance will decide on the success or failure in achieving the targets through the marketing operations.

4. There is no systematic reflection in terms of success and failure analysis (learning from failures is particularly instructive).

5. If short-term activities appear to work, that is it – there is little or no further inclination to pursue long-term activities even if these are considered promising.

Governmental, in our case, ministerial, leadership means, first of all, communication to the outside, and coordination of communication within the agency or organisation. Such communication requires professionalism. This, however, does not mean to simply replace practical experience with purely theoretical knowledge; it means rather the need to apply structural knowledge to experience and, thereby, systematically reflect practice in terms of theory.

In general, governmental institutions and their staff tend to have a particular set of problems. This is particularly true for the most central agencies involved in educational matters, i.e. national Ministries of Education. Most staff members, particularly those in leading positions, may share considerable prejudice against, and reservations about, the introduction and application of marketing principles and methods, and thereby resist the introduction of professional management strategies. They tend to worry about the impact that marketing would have on the identity of the organisation and their own position within that organisation. In addition, most people, when they hear the word “marketing”, simply think of media advertising and posters and wonder what that would have to do with their work as a governmental institution. Finally, ministries and

other governmental institutions tend to have long, and rather conservative, traditions based on structures that are not easily changed (some are even deeply rooted in colonial times). New concepts such as “internal controlling”, even more than the better known “external evaluation”, are in principle quite foreign to the image they have of their own organisation, of the way it should be run, and of their own responsibilities within the organisation.

Under a wider concept of “marketing”, MoE can indeed be said to correspond to commercial enterprises in the market economy and, therefore, require professional management. This equation may sound surprising at first, but makes sense once we become aware of the following facts^{vi}:

1. MoE organise and coordinate activities of people;
2. MoE acquire and use financial and other means and transform these as factors of production (inputs) into goods and services (outputs) that are being used by other people.

Further, ministries, like players in the commercial sector – at least in theory – would allow for:

1. Integrated marketing, i.e. coordination of all marketing activities among all sectors and sub-organisations;
2. Flexibility and efficiency in the face of changing data and conditions in its environment;
3. Creativity and innovation potential;
4. Qualification of staff for certain functions.

However, MoE do not restrict their activities to the economic dimension, even though economic considerations such as cost-benefit relationship are also a prerequisite for ministries to fulfil their obligations to the education sector. In this sense, education is economically “conditioned” in the double sense of the word “condition”: it is “made possible” to take place in the first place, and it is “restricted” by financial and other constraints.

Accordingly, in order also to be efficient within a cost-benefit regime, MoE require professional management and marketing like any commercial enterprise of comparable size. Management in the wider sense is here conceived of as ‘a

bundle of steering tasks independent of type of enterprise' (Schreyögg 1993, quoted in Benkert 1994). What is different, however, and the reason for needing a specialised management theory for Social Marketing, is that economic targets for MoE, such as cost-benefit efficiency regarding quantitative achievements and hard products, are superimposed on cultural/educational targets of a qualitative nature that are soft products. It follows from the above that educational management must provide *service* for the needs of society rather than being profit-oriented.

Further, MoE tend to be public monopolists in a market without, or with only little, private competition. Monopolists, as we know, because of their position in an almost non-existent market, have a tendency to consider efficiency and marketing largely unnecessary. Where private competition in the educational sector is allowed, private schools and colleges tend to be more attractive to such consumers who can afford the costs. As a matter of fact, the recent past in Africa has shown an explosion in terms of numbers of private educational institutions on all levels.

Since a functioning MoE must be concerned about the relationship between strategic tasks, i.e. its "mission" and the specific targets that have been set for it by government policies, the available means (provided by the Ministry of Finance or non-governmental bodies, like foreign donors), and the demographic and cultural environment in which to perform its tasks, specialised management competence is required. This involves the application of models for marketing and controlling, besides other management functions such as budgeting and finances, staff planning and development.

Governmental institutions like ministries tend to face particular deficiencies regarding information flow and organisational structure:

1. Marketing is rarely accepted as being of any, and definitely not of prime, importance. Usually it is attributed some marginal status, if any at all.

2. Accordingly, there is no central marketing unit within the organisational structure. Rather, we might find a few individual members of staff in charge who have only little

knowledge about marketing concepts; often the whole issue is out-sourced to external consultants, if the ministry can be bothered at all.

3. There is no continuous collection and evaluation of information on past activities, so there is hardly a basis for information-based marketing (planning) and a solidly established marketing unit within the organisation that would have immediate access to the upper-level management or minister.

4. Marketing plans, if they exist, are not being used as steering tools, but are rather treated as archival materials.

5. Cost-benefit analyses and auditing hardly ever take place; if they are forced on the organisation, they usually have little or no consequences.

In Africa, in particular, frequent changes in government, and consequently, in the leadership of the relevant organisation lead to discontinuity that has negative effects on planning and implementation. New governments have a tendency to change policies at almost any cost in order to be publicly recognised as being different and, they hope, better – another instance of marketing in terms of public relations, related to image, if not to propaganda.

As opposed to NGOs or any (sometimes voluntary) organisation as part of civil society, governmental institutions are characterised by organisational structural features that appear to conspire towards lack of flexibility. Some of these features are:

1. Formalisation of internal communication as opposed to free interaction among members;
2. Formal external as opposed to informal and internal control mechanisms within the organisation;
3. Coordination: central leadership with predominantly or exclusively top-down communication;
4. Internal organisation: “subject/task”-oriented rather than according to “role” with strong input in bottom-up communication;
5. Staff recruitment: external selection, fixed (automatic) promotion procedures;

6. Motivation: physical presence rather than membership and job satisfaction;
7. Overall structure: hierarchic rather than democratic / participatory.

One wonders how many MoE in Africa do have a specialised management section that would handle, or be able to handle, marketing and controlling. Available organigrams of ministries - for instance, that of the former *MEN* in Niger (Bergmann and Yahouza 1992) - suggest that they have not. A separate marketing unit would require a minimum of specialised staff in leading positions, such as given in Figure 1.3.

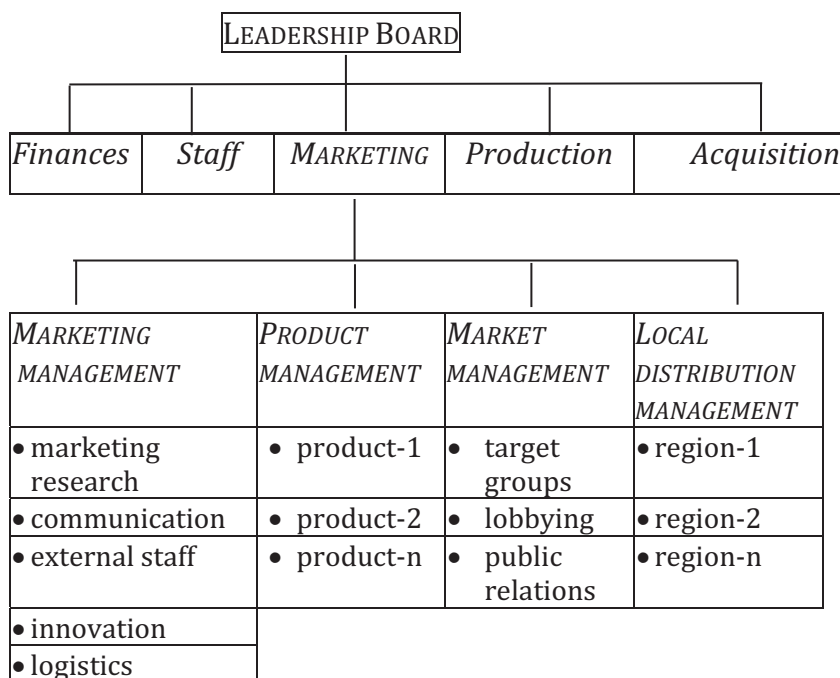


Figure 1.3: Illustration of a generic marketing unit integrated in the management (modified from Kotler 1978:232, as quoted in Bruhn/Tilmes 1994:222)

Note that each box filled by function terms in *italics* indicates important management staff positions that one needs to look at in terms of their specific challenges and requirements.

The personal qualifications and requirements for the staff of the marketing unit, managers and others that are valid for commercial organisations are definitely not those that are normally required for recruitment for any governmental institution. The following criteria for such a job do not appear to be the usual qualifications for hiring and promoting civil servants in ministries:

1. Ability and willingness to learn,
2. Ability to handle conflicts openly,
3. Adaptability,
4. Creativity and manifold personal interests,
5. Curiosity,
6. Decision-making capacities,
7. Feeling of social responsibility,
8. Flexibility,
9. Free working hours,
10. General openness,
11. Individual initiative,
12. Integrative capacities,
13. Problem-solving capacities,
14. Team-oriented leadership.

Since MoE do not appear to employ staff with the above qualifications, one should not be surprised about the widely deplored fact that education policies in general and certain innovative educational policies in particular, are slow in being implemented, if they are at all.

Since marketing is the orientation of activities towards the needs of target groups, we must first identify the corresponding *target groups* for our MoE, and the *needs* of these target groups. It will simply not do to say that the target group is society as such, and that its needs are, for instance, “formal education organised in educational cycles”. Clearly, we must refine the analysis.

Further, since marketing is, first of all, communication with the target groups, we need to identify their needs and interests, the conditions under which these needs can be satisfied, i.e. the required contents of education, and the modalities of providing education. All of this has to be done within the framework

provided by the educational policies that are determined by parliament and/or government, which, in a circular way, must already be based on market research and intensive communication with target groups and the ministry itself.

Maybe a short mention of the necessary market research is in order here (see Otte 1999). Being empirical research in the true sense, market research must be planned, adhere to methodical principles and come up with reproducible results. Experts distinguish between empirical data elicitation on the one hand, and desk research on the other. For data elicitation, the standard methodology involves both market analysis and market observation (using tools such as individual and focus-group interviews, observation, experiments, both in the field and under laboratory conditions).

What is generally overlooked, however, is that it is not only groups of consumers of educational policies who are concerned (whom we would identify, first of all, as pupils, parents, and teachers). Other people and institutions within the wider environment of education are also consumers, such as politicians and decisions makers on various levels, administrators, donors, the media, the general public, professional organisations and syndicates.

It follows that marketing within the MoE must be organised as cross-sector activity. What would be needed is not just another directorate or section parallel to all other directorates or sections, but rather a truly cross-sector unit affecting all other administrative units and all staff members, in the sense of modern notions of *Integrated Social Management*. If not, we are facing a strong risk of unhappy rivalries between individual sections or directorates, which would be counter-effective to the measures proposed, when implemented by a marketing unit as just another parallel unit among many.

Further, *Integrated Social Marketing* requires the focused operation of various marketing instruments in order to achieve a maximum of synergetic effects, together with cross-sector internal coordination of the activities and communication within the responsible organisation. Effective social marketing programs further presuppose preciseness concerning:

1. Organisational prerequisites,
2. Staff qualification,
3. The implementation of effective controlling.

A relatively new, but strong, argument in favour of *Social Marketing* that involves education derives from the observation that education is increasingly becoming a field for *sociosponsoring*, meaning stronger influence of external donors on educational matters.^{vii} “Sociosponsoring” and Social Marketing are instruments which, when used systematically and professionally, will entail advantages for all who are vitally concerned with education - both organisations and target groups.

B. The Problem-Driven Perspective

Where the following section refers to situations on the ground, it has the Republic of Niger in mind as an example; details of how this applies to the Niger situation can be found in (Wolff 2004).

C. Target Group Analysis

Based on our general notion of leadership which has to do with external and internal communication, the identification of target groups is a primary leadership task. Certain marketing tools will then be reserved for certain target groups in order to enhance their motivation to behave and act in particular ways.

Each target group has specific needs or expectations that are often implicit rather than explicitly stated. Target groups may be institutional (e.g. governmental bodies, NGOs); organisations of civil society (e.g. professional organizations, syndicates) or individuals (decision makers, administrators, teachers, parents, etc.). Each target group is characterised by limited options in terms of social behaviour. Dealing with different target groups, therefore, requires access to a mix of communication and marketing tools.

D. Product Policy and Market Position

In a commercial context, marketing requires a product policy; in other words, decisions regarding the kind of products

and the market position with reference to these products, and taking account of the competitors. In the monopolist position of our MoE, the competitors are the other ministries and their financial needs and aspirations. They will also market their policies, be it at cabinet level or in terms of getting donor support, in order to have budget guarantees or even budget increases. As a rule, and under general governmental constraints, ministries compete for the same limited resources.

This means, that the MoE leadership must be aware of what makes education in general, and the suggested educational policy (for instance, multilingual universal primary education) in particular, attractive and a political requirement of highest priority: ideally of even higher priority than, for instance, national defence, public health, and infrastructure. Our proposed marketing unit would have to insist on the inherent cross-sector nature of education as a prerequisite for sustained development and poverty alleviation. This implies that education is the basis for the successful implementation of all other governmental policies. The discussion of economic consequences must follow such market positioning, which, in turn, must take notice of the criteria that target groups consider relevant.

E. Distribution Policy

In addition to product policy, we need a distributional policy, which involves logistics. This is where the traditional “inspections” that form part of most MoE could come in: not in order to control in a top-down fashion, but as a marketing tool for bottom-up communication with regard to local conditions. These include buildings, furniture, equipment, transport facilities, etc., and in-service training options, parent involvement and support, support from local government etc. This is particularly obvious in the rural areas in which school enrolment tends to be low, for several well-known reasons.

Nevertheless, certain quarters in mega-cities and townships may pose similar problems for different reasons, such as overcrowding and demands exceeding the facilities and infrastructure.

F. Communication Policy

By far the most important tool to consider is communication policy with regard to the various target groups among the stakeholders and the public, not forgetting the essential internal communication within the MoE. Communication must disseminate relevant information that relates to the other marketing tools, namely product policy and the distribution policy.

Further, advertising the product (e.g. for a particular educational policy, like *multilingual UPE*^{viii}) belongs here, as does public relations in the traditional sense (i.e. regarding the image of the institution as a powerful, reliable and successful agent of social development and individual progress). Part of this is creating a corporate identity which not only adds favourably to the external image of the institution, but also enhances internal communication and makes the institution a favourite employer in the public sector. Formulating a “vision” and “mission statement” is regarded as a helpful device. (We should not forget that we would want the brightest and most motivated employees of public administration to work for our visionary model MoE!)

In particular, for communication within government and with legislative bodies as much as external donors, NGOs etc., a strong and persuasive mission statement must create the image of the MoE as the primary agency for development and poverty alleviation and the improvement of Human Rights.

External communication must address the prevalence of negative attitudes within government and the ministry itself, and among the public – whether they are traditionalists or non-traditionalists. All of these share specific fears, prejudices and misconceptions about formal education and the role of language therein.

Let us look first at traditionalist sections of the public who have problems with “modernisation” in general and require special marketing techniques (as shown in Table 1.2).

BEFORE	AFTER
Fear among Muslim community that pupils are lost to Islam	Muslim community no longer fearing that formal education is

	adversely affecting Islam
some religious dignitaries discourage formal education	most religious dignitaries in favour of formal education
many parents disallow formal education for their children	parents eager to enrol all their children in formal education

Table 1.2: Targets for campaign to promote formal education among “traditionalist” sections of the public

The non-traditionalist sector of the public will have to undergo considerable attitudinal change if they are to acknowledge the benefits of the ISM approach to education. The non-traditionalists are largely those who have profited in some way from formal education under the old system. The aim of changing their attitudes can only be realised when the new educational policy creates notable educational successes, with ensuing increased job opportunities, even for members of the present elite. From this derives probably the most challenging set of marketing targets (as shown in Table 1.3).

BEFORE	AFTER
<i>status maintenance syndrome:</i> secondary school leavers and university students averse to changes of the <i>status quo</i>	elitist and quasi-feudalistic self-conception of class of functionaries changed towards a more egalitarian and democratic philosophy
general disrespect for basic education	basic education recognised as highly relevant for development and poverty alleviation
primary school leavers who do not continue their formal education are considered losses to the system	general public views (lifelong) education as a human right for everybody, and a value in itself; basic education is accepted as being “terminal” for most children and providing a promising base also for traditional activities (farming, gardening, crafts etc.) and in the formal and informal sector of the economy
primary education is seen as leading to first school leaving certificate (CFEPD) and entrance to secondary education	

the general public views employment in the formal sector as the prime target of education	
the general public is not (yet) convinced of the advantages of educational reforms	general public is able to see the advantages of educational reforms and supports them as beneficial to their children
most initiatives regarding educational reforms have failed	

Table 1.3: Targets for campaign to promote the “new educational system” to the non-traditionalist sections of the public and to the functional elites

The public must further be addressed in terms of enhancing the prestige of the teaching profession in general and of primary school teachers in particular. This follows the above-mentioned marketing campaign regarding the public benefits of reformed quality primary education (see Table 1.4).

BEFORE	AFTER
low prestige of teachers	teaching considered a prestigious and highly respected profession
teaching is viewed as only a second choice in career planning	teaching considered by students to be a highly desirable profession
alternatives to teaching in terms of permanent employment diminish attractiveness of teaching profession	teaching is so attractive that the best qualified applicants can be employed

Table 1.4: Targets for image campaign to enhance prestige of the teaching profession

The two external communication campaigns described above, if successful, would almost automatically result in the targeted higher motivation and professional ethics of teachers (see Table 1.5).

BEFORE	AFTER
primary school teachers with low motivation	high motivation among primary school teachers
high turnover rate of teachers	job stability with low turnover among teachers
lack of vocational motivation (for teacher training) with many students	students in teacher training institutions highly motivated
lack of vocational motivation for many teacher trainers	teaching staff involved in teacher training highly motivated
teacher trainers with negative attitude towards pedagogical innovations	teacher trainers innovative and creative with regard to pedagogical innovations

Table 1.5: Targets for campaign to increase professional ethics and motivation among teachers

At the end of the campaigns, most negative features of the old educational system will have been replaced by the desired features of the new educational system (as shown in Table 1.6).

BEFORE	AFTER
generally poor working conditions for teachers	generally good working conditions for teachers
generally bad working conditions for pupils	generally good working conditions for pupils (in class)
prescribed number of classes/periods are not given	prescribed number of classes/periods given
no exposure to prescribed methods of teaching	innovative and creative methods of teaching being applied
standards of teaching are mediocre (at best)	good/high standards of teaching achieved
some teachers use corporal punishment	corporal punishment generally considered inappropriate by teachers

Table 1.6: Targets for campaign to lift standards and ameliorate working conditions in education

In a circular way, we may assume that, with the above attitudinal changes eventually brought about by the appropriate marketing campaigns, the more general positive achievements targeted by the new educational policies will be enhanced and accelerated (see Table 1.7).

1. teaching programs better adapted to the social and cultural environment
2. linkage firmly established with the immediate environment (milieu)
3. continuing high standards of school leavers with high literacy competence in L1, L2
4. low rate of class repeaters
5. dropout rate close to zero
6. 100% attendance at 1 st final exam
7. continuing high rate of success at 1 st final exam
8. creative and intellectual potential of pupils fully developed
9. illiteracy rate lowered: all school leavers highly literate in several languages
10. schooling rate increased to almost 100%
11. girls and boys equally well represented

Table 1.7: Targets for better performance and output in primary education

G. Other Policies

In the commercial sector, price policy is a highly relevant marketing tool. In the context of free primary education, this would be of no concern. Yet within a fee-paying secondary and tertiary education, this would open up a vast field of discussion.

In marketing education, however, at least one more management sector needs special attention: finances and high standards of accountancy, involving planning and controlling in terms of cost-benefit relations (see Table 1.8). This particular challenge is closely connected to the communication sector already described above in some detail.

BEFORE	AFTER
decrease of resource allocation to education	adequate/sufficient resource allocation to education
inadequate division of scarce resources within the educational system	adequate division of resources within the educational system
lack of means	availability of necessary means
increase of share of staff costs to the detriment of other costs per pupil	balanced distribution between staff costs and general per head costs per student
cost-benefit: costs per pupil rather high	adequate levelling of costs per student through even distribution of pupils per class, also urban/rural
particularly bad cost-benefit relation in rural areas (low attendance due to fact that children have to work)	
system-internal efficiency rather low	high internal efficiency
system-external efficiency (at job market) rather low	high external efficiency

Table 1.8: Targets for achieving high efficiency and balanced cost-benefit relations within the educational system

I. No Effective Management of Educational Reforms without “Controlling”

If we accept marketing as a promising leadership concept for managing education in Africa, we must accept controlling as an essential part of it. We know now that marketing education is not simply about selling a particular governmental policy to the public and implementing it in daily practice. It is a continuing process of complex two-way communication between all stakeholders in the wider environment of education (some concerned experts refer to this as a “multi-stakeholder dynamic partnership approach”).

Developing this communication is a feature of the inherently dynamic nature that makes marketing a strategic task for efficient leadership, which must be followed by the identification of operational tasks in order to be effectively

implemented. Efficient leadership will seek to optimise this communication both in its external dimension (i.e. *marketing* in the narrower sense) and in its internal dimension (i.e. *controlling*).

Controlling, as was previously pointed out, has less to do with control in the usual sense of the word than with internal communication within the organisation, based on evaluation regarding targets and efficiency. Looking at the organisational structures of MoE – centralised or regionalised/localised – with its several specialised sections labelled “inspections”, one cannot help gaining the impression that “control” rather than “controlling” is at the heart of these institutions. That is, top-down control to make sure that top-down legislation and decrees are being followed to the letter rather than organising a dialogue and allowing for bottom-up communication and, therefore, permanent feedback from the grass roots. If, however, we interpret controlling as “steering”, its task is to provide and evaluate data concerning activities, achievements in terms of realising targets, costs and benefits. Controlling can take the form of external evaluations.

However, external evaluations, if compared to integrated controlling, would appear to be much less effective for the overall promotion of education, since it does not form part of the leadership concept of the MoE. It also does not involve internal communication within the MoE, nor continuous assessment. External evaluations tend to be regular exercises maybe every 5 or 10 years. External evaluation may be fine and have implications for external stakeholders like donor agencies, but for the country’s government and public, particularly an MoE, everybody concerned could easily turn their back on such external evaluation and continue with “business as usual”.

Controlling in the sense of steering is needed wherever we have different options for social behaviour. It is also needed in the absence of automatisms in the sequence of activities or if automatisms must be excluded when facing alternative decisions. This idea is contrary to the nature of bureaucratic institutions like a ministry, which is used to following legal prescriptions and decrees without any room for collective

decision making, and which are, therefore, largely characterised by rule-governed automatons.

The administrative reforms that are advocated here do not aim at totally revolutionising post-colonial administrative structures – this would be an impossible task and possibly suicidal for any administrative career. All that is advocated is the creation of a strong central marketing unit within the MoE, whose controlling section would organise the internal communication in terms of:

1. A common devotion to the jointly developed mission statement and targets, thereby fostering corporate identity and enhancing the image of the institution as an agent for development and poverty alleviation;

2. Identifying options for decision making within the framework of a given policy in areas where feedback from the target groups calls for modifications and precision (flexible strategies);

3. Organising internal feedback from practice to strategic planning in order to avoid unplanned developments;

4. Keeping an eye on cost-benefit relations.

Planning and controlling are two sides of the same coin, planning precedes controlling. Planning is proactive, its perspective relates to actions in the future, whereas controlling is, partly at least, concerned with a retroactive perspective in terms of deviations from original planning. At the same time, it is an early warning system in terms of consequences for future actions. In the narrower sense, controlling involves elicitation and condensing of data, analysis and reporting, and interpretation of findings.

In the wider sense, as it is sometimes applied, controlling would also include pre- and post-controlling activities, in other words, planning (preceding controlling in the narrower sense) and evaluation in terms of advising leadership with regard to the interpretation and options for actions to be taken (following controlling in the narrower sense). In particular, controlling would review:

1. Management strategies, including controlling itself, in terms of continuous assessments (possibly assisted by occasional and focused external evaluations),
2. Planning (strategic and operational),
3. Plan implementation (and correctives),
4. Cost-benefit relations,
5. Internal and external efficiency.

Further, and even more specialised, controlling would also have to pertain to staff controlling (i.e. having the right people in the right places, according to qualifications and motivation), and logistics controlling (i.e. the supply of material goods to the various locations where educational activities take place).

Controlling could be carried out internally by the organisation's central marketing unit, but it could also be outsourced to external consultants. Both strategies have their advantages and disadvantages in terms of familiarity (nearness vs. distance), shorter vs. longer communication channels, costs and conflicting interests.

VI. Conclusion

In as much as modern concepts regarding *Integrated Social Marketing* would ideally be put into practice across the board in a sweeping fashion, this might not work in many African contexts for several reasons, for example: lack of political will due to lack of educational and training opportunities, as well as resistance from within administrative structures, lack of qualified personnel, shortage of resources, budget problems. With regard to our model MoE, however, both marketing and controlling tools need not be introduced in such an overall fashion all at once. Rather, they could be introduced in terms of piecemeal marketing and controlling concepts. This would mean that a newly established marketing unit could concentrate, for instance, on marketing and controlling the implementation of multilingual UPE first and on multilingual adult literacy later. This suggestion, of course, somewhat

resembles what has long been known, especially among agents of foreign aid to Africa and their local counterparts, as “project management”.^{ix}

Project management aims at a well-defined particular task to be accomplished, whereas marketing and controlling, in the sense of leadership concepts and support, are permanent features of modern management with a long-term perspective. The introduction of marketing concepts by project would be feasible if it entailed a step-by-step combination of several selected areas of focus (or projects) in order to create an expanding network for strategic planning – parallel to the expansion of the role of strategic management in general.

This systematic strategy for the introduction of a marketing philosophy into traditionally highly bureaucratic institutions would probably also be appropriate in view of the widespread absence, or low degree, of specialised professionalism on the part of ministerial leadership. A highly professional marketing unit would be of little use in an institution whose leadership was incapable of integrating the results of controlling into any kind of strategic management. In any case, the first steps must be the expression by government of the political will to embrace modern concepts of language and education management. It must give the go ahead for serious implementation by establishing a highly professional marketing unit that is familiar with, and capable of, complying with modern concepts of Integrated Social Marketing for education policies in general, and language-in-education policies in particular, within the responsible ministry or ministries.

Most importantly, this central managerial unit must be guided by a vision of a democratic society in which the educational system allows every citizen to develop their full intellectual and creative potential through the continuous use of their first language, or any language that they are truly familiar with. Additive bi- and trilingualism in education is the indispensable foundation for most parts of Africa on the way towards sustained socio-cultural and politico-economic development, eradication of poverty, and finally breaking the invisible chains of mental colonisation. The peoples of Africa should feel encouraged to accept for themselves that it is better

to develop one's strengths than to try to compensate for one's weaknesses. With regard to the politics of language and education, this would mean to proudly exploit and expand on the inherited patterns of multilingualism so widely spread in Africa rather than obediently copying the monolingualism that appears to characterise the home country of the former colonial power. The challenge for Africa and Africans is to finally escape from the traps of colonisation, as has long been, and still needs to be, demanded by African intellectuals.

There is some feeling, that what is traditional is incompatible with what is progressive. This is mainly due to the fact that those things that are worth preserving in the so-called primitive African societies have been so much caricatured, ridiculed, and indeed condemned as savagery and decadent by the Europeans who set the norms of acceptance. Thus, the African is accidentally caught in a dualism of equally vicious sets of cultures militating against each other. As a consequence, he either becomes a caricature of himself or an imitator of others. (Manuwuike 1978)

And who, we may ask, wants a copy if they can have the original?

Africans have always lived out their lives and their cultures. The African Academy shall be the decisive instrument for the total liberation of the continent, and the revival of initiatives by the populations. It shall contribute to the dissemination of a dynamic vision of languages, vehicles of cultures and moral values, the basis of African societies, and unavoidable factors of integration, peace and an everlasting endogenous development within a balanced and a dynamic partnership with languages inherited from colonization. It is now time that Africa stopped being the only continent where a school child can have access to knowledge and science only through a language other than the one spoken in his family! (Adama Samassekou, President of ACALAN 2002).

The time for change has come, and the necessary educational reforms are long overdue.

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ⁱThe original Keynote Address summarized a contribution by the author (Wolff 2006[online]) to a *Working Document* prepared for the *ADEA 2006 Biennial Meeting* in Libreville, Gabon, March 27-31, 2006 (cf. Alidou et al. 2006). For publication in print in the WOCAL-7 proceedings, the original online chapter “Managing Educational Reforms in Africa” of the *Working Document* was updated and modified.

ⁱⁱThe terms “*Integrated Social Marketing*” and “*Controlling*” will be explained and discussed in detail further below.

ⁱⁱⁱIt is obvious that, in the African context, the term *mother tongue* cannot and must not be construed in the literal sense. Following established and also UNESCO usage, *mother tongue-languages* refer to any person’s first language L1 (or set of L1 languages) with which s/he grew up and in which s/he underwent primary socialization. In African multilingual contexts, children can and do grow up with several *mother tongues* (of which none would have to be the actual language of their biological mothers or fathers).

^{iv}The analysis usually follows a so-called SWOT approach (Strengths - Weaknesses – Opportunities - Threats) where *Strengths* and *Weaknesses* apply to the internal environment (i.e. the organization itself and its structures), while *Opportunities* and *Threats* apply to the external environment. The SWOT approach will be implicit in our later discussion of the challenges for MoE in the African multilingual contexts.

^vwww.acalan.org

^{vi}The following section is based on Benkert (1994). We will apply Benkert’s general outline of marketing and controlling for public cultural institutions as narrowly as possibly to one particular agent, i.e. a hypothetical Ministry of Education (MoE) in a generalized African context. Illustrations, where introduced, refer to the situation in Niger, West Africa, with which the author is particularly familiar having lived and worked there as a university teacher for three years (1987-1989).

^{vii}International NGOs and agencies were actually quite slow in discovering education as one of the most important fields for developmental aid but are now paying growing attention to it. A case in point is the former German Technical Cooperation GTZ (*Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*; today known as GIZ – *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*); see their brochure on “Universal Primary Education in Multilingual Societies” (GTZ, 2003, author: Kurt Komarek) commissioned by ADEA for its Biennial Meeting in Mauritius, December 2003.

^{viii}UPE = Universal Primary Education

^{ix}Often, project management already includes a controlling or monitoring unit, based on the general insight that controlling, like marketing as such, is of a cross-sector nature.

La néologie d'emprunt a-t-elle un impact sur le système phonologique et morphologique du baka?

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A. Introduction

Au cours de leurs migrations, les populations baka sont entrées en contact avec des agriculteurs oubangiens à qui elles doivent aujourd'hui la quasi-totalité de leur vocabulaire (Bahuchet et Thomas 1988, Bahuchet 1992 et 1993). Présents dans la forêt équatoriale camerounaise depuis la deuxième moitié du 19^e siècle (Bahuchet 1993a : 127), elles sont entrées en contact avec d'autres populations à qui elles ont aussi emprunté des termes. Dans cet article, nous nous proposons de mettre en évidence les adaptations que subissent les termes du lexique empruntés aux langues locales environnantes. Il sera en effet question de décrire les mécanismes de naturalisation déployés par la langue emprunteuse qu'est le baka.

Le baka est une langue Niger-Congo, du sous-groupe Adamawa Oriental (Greenberg 1955). Selon (Dieu et Renaud 1983), cette langue appartient à la famille oubangienne et est rangée dans la zone 309. C'est la langue parlée par les Pygmées baka ou tout simplement les Baka qui vivent en Afrique centrale, précisément au Congo-Brazzaville, au Gabon et au Cameroun. Au Cameroun, les Baka sont localisés dans la partie Sud-Est de la zone forestière, partagée entre les départements de la Boumba-et-Ngoko, la Kadéy, le Haut-Nyong et le Dja-et-Lobo. Ils constituent la communauté la plus importante de cet ensemble avec une démographie de 40,000 personnes (Abega et Bigombe Logo 2006 : 55).

Dans le domaine des emprunts baka à d'autres langues, une étude antérieure (Bahuchet 1993 : 72) avait noté la présence en baka, d'éléments correspondants à des préfixes de classes nominales dans les langues bantoues. Dans une analyse

pluridisciplinaire sur le baka parlé au Gabon, (Paulin 2010 : 73-79) fait mention de la présence de quelques termes fangiⁱ dans cette variété linguistique et des modifications que les termes non intégrés entraînent sur le système phonologique de la langue. Pour ce qui est des emprunts lexicaux du baka parlé au Cameroun, nous nous étions superficiellement attardés sur les emprunts baka aux langues officielles que sont le français et l'anglais (Djoupee 2002 : 44-46). Dès lors, notre analyse portera sur les emprunts baka aux langues bantoues environnantes et particulièrement au kóonzime. Ainsi, nous présenterons d'abord la répartition sémantique des emprunts, ensuite leur intégration linguistique (phonologie, morphologie) et enfin l'influence que ces emprunts entraînent sur le système de la langue. Cette analyse sera précédée de la présentation du corpus.

I. Le corpus

Nos données proviennent de trois sources bien distinctes : la première concerne le dictionnaire *baka-français* (1979, 2010) où 362 termes, regroupés par l'auteur sous l'appellation *kaka*, ont été relevés. Or des études ethnologiques ont révélé que les Baka désignent indifféremment par ce même terme toutes les différentes ethnies installées le long de la piste Yokadouma-Salapoumbé. Les deux autres sources qui sont les paroles de chants bakaⁱⁱ ainsi qu'un recueil de paroles spontanées que nous avons enregistrées et transcrites entre juillet 2009 et août 2011, ont permis de répertorier respectivement 61 et 111 emprunts baka. Cela a donné un total de 541 termes étrangers empruntés par le baka. De fait, en examinant la localisation actuelle des Baka et leur environnement linguistique, Bahuchet (1993 : 68) écrit que ces derniers côtoient des populations dont 14 parlent des langues bantoues (kota B25, mahongwe B25, bulu A74, fang A75, maka A83, njem A84, bajwe A84, konabem A85a, bakwele A85b, mpiemo A86, mpompo A86, bakum A91, pol A92, et le kako A93) et deux des langues oubanguiennes (gbaya, bangantu). Une enquête menée (autant chez les Baka que chez leurs voisins) dans les arrondissements de Lomié et Salapoumbé

(Est-Cameroun) a permis d'identifier l'origine de 359 emprunts. Ils sont répartis ainsi qu'il suit :

1. 17 termes provenant du Lingala et du Limasa ainsi que du sango (langues parlées respectivement au Congo-Brazzaville et en Centrafrique).

2. 30 termes provenant des langues officielles (français et anglais).

3. 83 termes provenant des langues oubanguiennes (bangando et baya) et

4. 229 termes venant des langues bantoues de la zone A (kunabem, kakɔ, bulu, njem, maka, pubien, mvumvum, mbimo, ewondoⁱⁱⁱ, kóonzimé, mboman)

5. les 182 autres feraient partie des langues localisées dans des zones non explorées.

De fait, l'analyse sera limitée aux emprunts baka au kóonzimé, qui sont non seulement de loin les plus nombreux avec 122 termes, mais aussi parce que plusieurs élicitations ont été faites auprès des locuteurs natifs.

II. La répartition sémantique des emprunts

Dans la langue cinq domaines paraissent se prêter aux emprunts. Ils sont inscrits dans le tableau suivant :

Domaines	Langues sources	Concepts	Baka	Gloses
Agriculture	kóonzime	èkòm fímí èkèl èyǎ ètòrà àkpànà...	kòmò pìmbì /pìmì kèlì èyà àtònà àngbàrà	<i>goyave</i> <i>orange</i> <i>ananas</i> <i>citronnelle</i> <i>tabac à priser</i> <i>igname du village</i>
Zoologie	-//-	nkòèè mpùl yángá	nkòyè mbùlì yángá	<i>panthère</i> <i>antilope sitatunga</i> <i>cheval, âne</i>
Religion	-//-	mèjàʔlà...	mèjàkàlà	<i>Prière</i>
Culture	-//-	kùl kùl dzìm	kùlì kùlù jìmí	<i>tam-tam-sp.</i> <i>clan, famille, race</i> <i>présage</i>

		mpéné săn...	mbéndé săn	<i>loi, interdit décider</i>
Vie sociale	-//-	njì? èkàm jílá bùmó o-byèé báŋà păŋ mpé? pílè nté?è mètàrè èkpâhà yén	njìkì kàmwà jílá èbùmà àbíyá báŋà păŋ mpé? pílè nté?è mètàrè kpáhà yénì	<i>chapeau accepter remplaçant ballon femme-sp. essayer dur, solide poche enrouler déranger début faire vite miroir</i>

Tableau 2.1: Domaine des emprunts baka au kóonzime

Au regard du tableau ci-dessus, on remarque que les Baka ont beaucoup emprunté dans le domaine de la vie sociale et surtout des réalités ignorées d'eux. Mais la question qu'il faut se poser est la suivante : qu'est-ce qui explique qu'un emprunt donné soit très proche ou très différent de l'item source en baka? Cette question nous conduit tout droit à l'analyse des processus qui régissent l'intégration des emprunts.

III. Intégration phonologique

Pour qu'il y ait intégration phonologique, il faut qu'il y ait conformité aux normes de syllabation baka qui ne connaît en finale que des syllabes ouvertes. Les phonèmes étrangers au baka doivent être ensuite remplacés par les phonèmes « pertinents » pour cette langue. En outre, il faut respecter le positionnement des consonnes à l'intérieur de la structure syllabique considérée. Au regard de ces critères, nous essaierons de voir si les emprunts de notre corpus s'intègrent au système du baka. Mais avant, nous rappellerons le système phonologique des voyelles et des consonnes ainsi que les structures syllabiques de la langue (Djoupee 2002, 2007):

	Etirées	Neutre	Arrondies
Fermées	i		u
Mi-fermées	e		o
Mi-basses	ɛ		ɔ
Basses		a	

Tableau 2.2: Système phonologique des voyelles

	Labiales	Alvéolaires	Palatales	Vélaires	Labio-vélaires
Glottales	ʔ	ɗ		ʔ	
Sourdes		t		k	kp
Sonores	b	d	dʒ	g	gb
Mi-nasales	mb	nd	ndʒ	ng	ngb
Nasales	m	n	ɲ		
Continues	ɸ	s	j	h	w
Latérales		l			

Tableau 2.3: Système phonologique des consonnes

	1	2	3	4
Ouvertes	V CV	CVCV CVV	CVCVCV CVCVV CVVCV	CVCVCVCV CVCVCVV

Tableau 2.4: Structures syllabiques

A. L'ajout d'une voyelle finale

Les items concernés par ce processus sont des monosyllabes à structure fermée CVC. La langue pour les adopter, ajoute à la consonne (C) isolée, une voyelle pour former une autre syllabe de type CV. Ainsi, on passe d'une structure CVC dans la langue de départ pour une structure CVCV dans la langue d'arrivée :

kóonzime

(1) -kǎn [kan]

ɓaka

kàní

gloses

proverbe, parabole

(2) -kùl	[kul]	kùlù	<i>famille, race</i>
(3) -kùl	[kul]	kùlì	<i>tam-tam pour appeler</i>

L'intégration des phonèmes absents en baka

B. Le traitement du r

Pour l'adaptation du son [r], inexistant dans la langue, deux possibilités se présentent.

C. Le remplacement par une dentale

Pour s'insérer dans le système phonologique baka, la vibrante [r], placée en inter vocalique dans la langue source, devient selon les cas, la consonne occlusive sourde [t] et la nasale [n] en baka:

kóonzime	baka	gloses
(4) -bàrà [bara]	bàtà	<i>poignée de main</i>
(5) -kùrà [kura]	kùtà	<i>coup de poing</i>
(6) è-bùrà [ebura]	mèbùtà	<i>patate douce</i>
(7) è-tòrà [etɔra]	àtònà/ ètòtà	<i>variété de banane douce</i>

Dans l'exemple (7), le son [ɔ] qui devient [o], serait une variante libre du premier en kóonzime.

D. Le remplacement par une voyelle finale

Elle est inhérente à tous les mots qui dans la langue de départ ont la vibrante [r] en position finale. Alors, cette dernière au lieu de s'effacer est substituée par la voyelle [a] une fois intégrée dans la langue réceptrice :

Kóonzime	baka	gloses
(8) è-gôr [egor]	èkùà	<i>filet de pêche</i>

Ici, on observe que la consonne [g], moins représentée en intervocalique dans la langue cible (0,77%) est remplacée par la consonne [k], plus représentée dans cette position (15,02%). Ainsi, la règle de dévoisement peut se formaliser comme suit :

g → k / v — v

Après les processus de dévoisement et de dévibrantisation, la voyelle [o] devient [u] et donne lieu à la séquence vocalique [ua].

E. Le traitement des semi-nasales sourdes

Ce processus intervient pour intégrer dans la langue des termes qui en kóonzime comportent des mi-nasales sourdes inexistantes dans la langue cible. Il s'agit de la vélaire *nk*, de la labio-vélaire *nkp* et de la bilabiale *mp* qui deviennent respectivement les consonnes sonores *ng*, *ngb* et *mb*:

$$\begin{pmatrix} +\text{Nas} \\ -\text{Son} \end{pmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} +\text{Nas} \\ +\text{Son} \end{pmatrix}$$

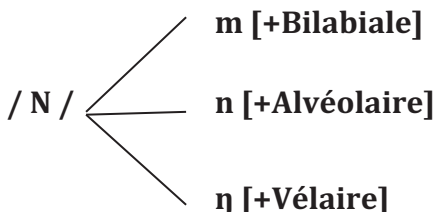
kóonzime	ɓaka	gloses
(9) à- nk ùmà [aŋkuma]	ʔàngù m à [ʔàngù m à]	<i>puce- chique</i>
(10) á- nkp à n à [aŋkpana]	àngb à n à [àngb à n à]	<i>Tabac à priser</i>
(11) nk ùl [ŋkul]	ng ùl [ngùl]	<i>force capacité</i>
(12) mp ùl [mpul]	mb ùl [mbùl]	<i>antilope sitatunga</i>
(13) nk ùlyên [ŋkulyen]	ng ùl è nd ò [ngùl è nd ò]	<i>arc-en-ciel</i>

En kóonzime la consonne nasale peut parfois se comporter comme une voyelle et être apte à assumer la fonction de centre de syllabe. Elle est dès lors appelée *nasale syllabique*; toutefois, si cette dernière est récurrente dans certaines langues bantoues de la zone A comme l'ewondo (Essonon 2000), en kóonzime sa présence est très marginale. C'est en effet ce qu'attestent (Keith et Beavon 2006 : 7) lorsqu'ils écrivent :

Dans le koonzime, la nasale syllabique ne figure que dans une phrase telle que |ńbër|, « [(Il/elle) est] à la maison » ou |ńkana|, « [(Il/elle) est] en ville ». Ces cas rares exceptés, il n'existe pas de nasales syllabiques. Il existe pourtant des groupes de consonnes dans lesquels la première consonne

est une nasale qui se prononce au même point d'articulation que la consonne ou la semi voyelle suivante. Un nombre considérable de consonnes peuvent être précédées de telles nasales homorganiques, représentées avec « N »...

Ainsi, les nasales qui précèdent les consonnes dans les exemples ci-dessus sont donc des nasales homorganiques (N) qui se présentent comme suit:



Ces dernières existent également en baka et ont un comportement identique. Par ailleurs, on peut remarquer, au-delà de ces nasales homorganiques et de la sonorisation des consonnes subséquentes, l'épenthèse vocalique dans les exemples (11), (12) et (13). Ce dernier exemple qui subit plusieurs modifications en plus, est analysé avec détail au paragraphe (2-2-4).

F. Le traitement des sonores en position intervocalique ou finale

Cette règle concerne les consonnes bilabiale [b] et vélaire [g] qui, en kóonzime, se trouvent respectivement en finale et en intervocalique. Ces consonnes deviennent sourdes en s'intégrant dans le système phonologique baka :

	kóonzime	gloses	baka	gloses
(14)	è-gôr [egor]	filet_sp.	èkúà	filet de pêche
(15)	è-díb [edib]	ouvrir	èdìϕà	Clef

G. Le traitement des nasales a l'intervocalique

Cette règle concerne la dentale /n / et la vélaire /ŋ/. On remarque que ces deux consonnes deviennent respectivement la

dentale mi-nasale [nd] et la vélaire mi-nasale [ŋg] en intervocalique :

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} +\text{Son} \\ -\text{Nas} \end{array} \right) \rightarrow \left(\begin{array}{c} -\text{Obst} \end{array} \right)$$

La consonne [n] est bien attestée dans la langue mais très peu représentée en position médiane dans les dissyllabes (4,62%). C'est sans doute pour cette raison qu'une fois présente en intervocalique et en finale dans la langue source, elle se prénasalise en [nd], beaucoup plus représentée à cette position dans la langue cible (9,05%):

kóonzime		baka		gloses
(16) wúnù	[wunu]	wòndò	[wondo]	arachide
(17) Npéné	[mpene]	Nbéndé	[mbende]	loi, interdit
(18) Nkàlyên	[ŋkəlyɛn]	Ngùlèndò	[ŋgùlèndò]	arc-en-ciel

Dans l'exemple (16), après le changement de timbre de la consonne [n], la voyelle [u] devient la voyelle [o] avec qui elle serait en variation libre dans la langue source.

Quant à l'exemple (18), après la prénasalisation, quatre autres processus régissent l'intégration:

1. La sonorisation de la semi-nasale sourde [ŋk] obtenue (voir 2.2.2).
2. La voyelle [ɰ] n'ayant pas de correspondance dans la langue est devenue [u].
[ɰ] → [u]
3. Le baka n'admet pas une séquence de consonnes (C1C2) et encore moins la séquence consonne plus semi-consonne (Cw ou Cy) au sein du radical. Aussi, pour qu'on ait une structure syllabique CV, les locuteurs ne procèdent-ils pas simplement à l'effacement de la semi-consonne. La règle d'effacement peut s'écrire de la manière suivante :

$$y \rightarrow \emptyset / \text{CV} \# \text{ —}$$

- Ainsi, on aura un terme dissyllabique **CVCVC / ngùlènd/**
4. Cependant, cette structure n'étant pas attestée dans la langue, cette dernière va procéder à l'ajout, en finale de mot, de la voyelle épenthétique [ɔ] :
- ∅ → ɔ / C # —

D'où le terme trisyllabique **CVCVCV /ngùlèndɔ/** après son intégration totale dans la langue cible.

Pour ce qui est de la vélaire /ŋ/ qui n'existe pas en baka, elle est interprétée comme la semi-nasale correspondante [ŋg]. Cette dernière est suivie d'une voyelle pour respecter la structure canonique de la syllabe (CV) telle que présentée plus haut (cf.2.1) :

kóonzime		baka		gloses
(19) è-nǎŋ	[enǎŋ]	nángà	[nanɡa]	<i>enduire une flèche</i>
(20) -síŋà	[siŋa]	síngà	[siŋɡa]	<i>fil à coudre</i>

2.2.5. Le remplacement du [f] initial

Dans notre corpus, un seul terme est concerné par ce phénomène. Il s'agit en effet du mot **kóonzime** *fímí* qui possède la consonne labio-dentale [f], inexistante en baka. Pour la recevoir dans son socle, elle la remplace par la labiale ϕ :

kóonzime		baka	gloses
(21) -fímí	[fimi]	ϕ ìmbí	<i>orange, citron</i>

Étant donné que le phonème /m/ est plus représenté (8,47%) en position C2 dans les dissyllabes C1VC2V que le phonème /mb/ (4,81%) dans la langue récipiendaire, on peut affirmer que la substitution du premier par le second est due au fait que ces deux phonèmes seraient des variantes libres dans la langue source.

La voyelle [i], est devenue [i] pour se conformer au système vocalique baka (voir tableau 1).

H. Le remplacement du [ʔ] final

Dans la langue, le coup de glotte se place toujours en initiale (Phillips, 1979) pourtant, en kóonzime, il peut se placer soit en médiane, soit en finale. Pour épouser le système phonologique *ɓaka*, la glottale [ʔ] devient la consonne vélaire sourde [k] qui est elle-même un allomorphe de la première dans la langue source. Ainsi, on dira que la consonne glottale [ʔ] devient la consonne vélaire sourde [k] chaque fois qu'elle est placée après un noyau syllabique dans la langue source. Cette vélarisation est suivie de l'ajout d'une voyelle finale.

Règle de Vélarisation : ʔ → k / v — #

Épenthèse vocalique : ∅ → v / C#—

	kóonzime		ɓaka		gloses
(22)	-sáʔ	[saʔ]	sàkò	[sakɔ]	<i>orange, citron</i>
(23)	Nzòʔ	[nzoʔ]	Njòkù	[ndʒoku]	<i>éléphant</i>
(24)	Nzyéʔ	[nzyɛʔ]	Njèkò	[ndʒekɔ]	<i>nasse à poisson</i>
(25)	Njĩʔ	[ndʒiʔ]	Njìkì	[ndʒiki]	<i>chapeau</i>
(26)	-dzĩm	[dzim]	jìmí	[dʒimi]	<i>présage</i>

Dans les exemples (23) et (24) on observe, en plus de la vélarisation et de l'épenthèse vocalique, un processus de palatalisation : la consonne mi-nasale alvéolaire [nz] absente en *ɓaka* devient la consonne mi-nasale palatale [ndʒ] pendant son adoption dans la langue :

[nz] → [ndʒ]

Cette palatalisation concerne aussi l'exemple (26) où la consonne alvéolaire sonore [dz] devient la consonne palatale sonore [dʒ] :

[dz] → [dʒ]

IV. Intégration morphologique

Dans les langues bantoues, les nominaux présentent des modalités préfixées qui permettent de les organiser en classes nominales (Guthrie 1976b). Ces classes permettent d'apparier les nominaux suivant une opposition singulier /pluriel. Ainsi,

parler d'intégration morphologique des emprunts dans les langues à classes nominales revient à dire que les items empruntés doivent se ranger dans l'une ou l'autre de ces classes en s'appropriant pour la plupart des cas, les morphèmes y afférents. On peut citer à titre d'exemple, l'ewondo, où les noms d'emprunt sont attestés dans la plupart des classes nominales :

Genre IV (cl7, 8)

(Français) minute enúten/binúten

équipe ekíb/bikíb

crayon ekiriyóŋ/bikiriyóŋ (Essono 2000 : 258-259).

Au regard de ces exemples, on peut remarquer qu'en ewondo, chaque emprunt est introduit dans une classe nominale précise. Il convient de signaler que le kóonzime tout comme l'ewondo, est une langue à classes nominales ce qui n'est pas le cas pour le baka. À la place, la flexion en nombre est manifestée par le morphème /-ó/ qui se suffixe aux radicaux nominaux. Alors, que deviennent les préfixes de classes nominales des items kóonzime lorsqu'ils s'intègrent en baka ? Mon hypothèse est la suivante : pour être conforme aux items baka, ces derniers chutent pendant leur intégration dans la langue cible. De fait, le corpus comporte quatorze termes qui obéissent à ce principe. Nous en présentons quelques exemples :

kóonzime		baka	gloses
(27) è-bólà	(cl 5/6) -	bólà	<i>le fait de se venger, de rendre la pareille</i>
(28) è-kùmò	(cl 5/6) -	kùmò	<i>fin, terme</i>
(29) è-bùmà	(cl 5/6) -	bùmó	<i>ballon</i>

S'ajoutent à ce répertoire tous les mots ayant, au singulier, un préfixe zéro dans la langue de départ comme en témoignent les mots ci-dessous tirés de cette série :

kóonzime		baka	gloses
Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
(30) -bèné	o-bèné (cl 1/2)	bènè	bènè-ó <i>clavicule</i>

- (31) -kǎn mǐ-kǎn (cl 3/4) kǎní **kǎní-ó** *parabole*
 (32) -sǎʔ bǐ-sǎʔ (cl 7/8) sǎkó **sǎkó-ó** *campement de pièges*

Cependant, il y a des termes qui dérogent à cette loi : nous avons émis plus haut l'hypothèse selon laquelle les emprunts baka aux langues à classes nominales doivent se défaire de leurs préfixes de classe pendant le processus d'intégration ; bien d'exemples illustrent cette hypothèse. Toutefois, le corpus met en évidence plusieurs emprunts au kóonzime qui s'éloignent de ce principe, du fait qu'ils ont été réceptionnés dans la langue cible, les uns avec l'indice de classe du singulier (33-36), les autres avec l'indice de classe du pluriel pour désigner toujours le singulier (37-40):

kóonzime		baka		gloses
Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	
(33) è-tǝrà (cl 5)	mè-tǝrà (cl 6)	àtǝnà (cl 5)	àtǝnà-ó (cl 6)	<i>banane_sp.</i>
(34) á-byèé (cl1a)	ba-byèé (cl2a)	àbìyà (cl1a)	àbìyà-ó (cl2a)	<i>femme_sp.</i>
(35) á-nkpàná (cl 5)	bà-ánkpàná (cl 5)	àngbàná (cl5)	àngbàná-ó (cl 6)	<i>tabac_sp.</i>
(36) mè-jáʔlà (cl 1)	mì-jáʔlá (cl 4)	mèjàkàlà (cl 1)	mèjàkàlà-ò (cl 4)	<i>prière</i>

kóonzime		baka		gloses
Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	
(37) è-kù (cl 5)	mè-kù (cl 6)	mèkù (cl 5)	mèkù-ó (cl 6)	<i>piège assomoir</i>
(38) -mbì (cl 3)	mì-mbì (cl 4)	mèmbì (cl 3)	mèmbì-ó (cl 4)	<i>espèce</i>
(39) è-sʉŋ (cl 5)	mè-sʉŋ (cl 6)	mèsò (cl 5)	mèsò-ò (cl 6)	<i>puce chique</i>
(40) è-bùrà (cl5)	mè-bùrà (cl 6)	mèbùtà (cl 5)	mèbùtà-ó (cl 6)	<i>patate douce</i>

Dans l'exemple (39), au lieu d'une prénasalisation en [ŋg], on assiste plutôt à la simplification de la nasale [ŋ] :

ŋ → ø /V# —

Le son [ɥ], inexistant en baka est remplacé par [o] ; aussi, la voyelle [e] n'est-elle pas remplacée par [ɛ] qui serait en variation libre avec la première dans la langue de départ.

Au regard des exemples ci-dessus, on constate que le baka retient indifféremment la forme du singulier et du pluriel sans prendre en compte l'existence morphologique de l'opposition singulier/pluriel qu'il traite lui autrement. Ces items sont réceptionnés dans leur globalité.

D'un point de vue morphologique, (Thomas 1979: 155)^{iv} avait montré, dans les langues oubanguiennes dont fait partie le baka, la présence des éléments bantoues, en particulier des vestiges de « classes nominales figées ». Elle a affirmé qu'il était impossible de dire s'ils correspondaient à un système propre tombé en désuétude ou à des termes empruntés. Quelques années plus tard, (Bahuchet 1992 :72), va relever de nombreux mots baka dont la première syllabe correspond à un préfixe de classe dans les langues bantoues. Les résultats de l'analyse que nous venons de mener dans le cadre des emprunts lexicaux baka au kóonzime, langue bantoue A84, pourraient attester cet état de chose : de fait, nous avons répertorié trois morphèmes correspondant aux préfixes de classes nominales kóonzime, que nous classons dans le tableau ci-après :

Préfixes de classes nominales kóonzime	kóonzime	Correspondants baka	Gloses
(cl 1a/2a)	á-nkpàná (SG)	àngbàná (SG)	<i>tabac à priser</i>
à- / bà	bà-ánkpàná (PL)	àngbàná-ó (PL)	
(cl 3/4)	ø-mbì (SG)	mèmbì (SG)	<i>espèce, sorte,</i>
ø -mì	mì-mbì (PL)	mèmbì-ó (PL)	<i>qualité</i>
(cl 5/6)	è-kù (SG)	mèkù (SG)	<i>piège-</i>
è-/mè	mè-kù (PL)	mèkù-ó(PL)	<i>assommoir</i>

Tableau 2.5: Correspondance des syllabes initiales baka d'avec les préfixes de classe kóonzime

Au regard de ce tableau, on peut remarquer que pendant l'intégration, les Baka ne tiennent pas compte de la dichotomie singulier/pluriel observée dans la morphologie kóonzime ; ce qui fait que la conservation ou non de la forme du singulier ou du pluriel des termes empruntés, ne modifie en rien le fait qu'ils ne retiennent pas un système de classes nominales, inexistant dans leur langue. C'est la raison pour laquelle les syllabes répertoriées par (Bahuchet, 1992) sont figées et ne déterminent jamais des accords de classes, au même titre que celles rencontrées en baka. Comme il a été dit plus haut, l'accord des emprunts baka en nombre répond à la norme de la formation du pluriel dans la langue. Il s'agit en effet de la suffixation du morphème /o/ au radical nominal; laquelle suffixation, il convient de le signaler, n'est pas systématique.

V. Emprunts phonologiquement non intégrés

Si la quasi-totalité des emprunts est parfaitement assimilée et ne se distingue plus des mots baka d'origine, certains, pour des raisons qui ne sont pas faciles de déceler, conservent leurs particularités propres. Cette non-intégration phonologique se manifeste par la dérogation à certaines règles ci-dessus présentées. Le corpus en compte 19 dont nous présentons quelques-uns :

A. Le maintien de certaines consonnes inexistantes en baka

C'est le cas des semi-nasales *mv*, *nt* et de la bilabiale *p(i)* qui sont retenues avec ajout d'une voyelle finale et de la nasale vélaire *ŋ*, **(ii)** retenue avec et sans ajout d'une voyelle.

(i)	kóonzime		baka		gloses
(41)	Nvá?	[mvaʔ]	Nváʔà	[mvaʔ]	joie
(42)	è-nté?	[enteʔ]	Ntéʔè	[nteʔe]	déranger
(43)	è-píl	[epil]	pílè	[pilɛ]	enrouler

(ii)	kóonzime	baka	gloses
(44)	è-bán	bánà	<i>essayer</i>
(45)	-pǎŋ	pǎŋ	<i>dur, solide</i>

Il y a en outre la consonne affriquée **tf** retenue sans ajout d'une voyelle épenthétique:

	kóonzime	baka	gloses
(46)	è-tfél	tfél	<i>poser</i>

B. La modification des procédures d'intégration de certains phonèmes absents du baka

Les contacts réguliers avec le kóonzime font évoluer la perception des semi-nasales sourdes ; celles qui au départ étaient sonorisées le deviennent de moins en moins et sont produites sourdes :

	kóonzime		baka		gloses
(47)	Nkǽǽ	[ŋkœ:]	Nkòyè	[ŋkoye]	<i>panthère</i>
(48)	Npé?	[mpe?]	Npé?	[mpe?]	<i>poche</i>

L'exemple (47) comporte dans la langue source, deux phonèmes inexistant en baka : /œ:/ et /ŋk/ ; pour une tentative d'intégration, la première voyelle longue est respectivement remplacée par les voyelles /o/ et /e/ à l'intersection desquelles est insérée la semi-consonne /y/ pour former la structure syllabique CVCV, conforme à la langue ; cependant, pour une intégration totale, on s'attend à ce que le phonème /ŋk/ soit remplacé par une sonore comme envisagé plus haut (2.2.2) ce qui n'est pas le cas, d'où la non intégration phonologique de ce mot.

Dans l'exemple (48), on assiste non seulement au maintien de la semi-nasale *mp*, mais aussi au maintien du coup de glotte ? en finale de mot.

Le phonème *r* qui était remplacé par la latérale *l* en intervocalique ou la voyelle *a* en finale est maintenu.

	kóonzime	baka	gloses
(49)	mè-tàré	mètáré	<i>début</i>
(50)	-péré	péré	<i>là-bas</i>

La nasale *n* qui était pré nasalisée en *nd* demeure telle quelle (voir 2.2.4).

	kóonzime	baka	gloses
(51)	è-săn	săn	<i>decider</i>

D'une manière générale, ce qui est frappant dans ces termes non phonologiquement intégrés, c'est le maintien du coup de glotte ʔ en intervocalique (exemples 41, 42) et en finale (48), le maintien des nasales *ŋ*, *n* (exemples 44, 45, 51), de la latérale *l* (exemple 46) en finale, celui des semi-nasales sourdes (exemples 41, 42, 47, 48) et des consonnes orales *p*, *tʃ*, *r* (exemples 43, 46, 45, 49, 50).

Le maintien de la structure CVC n'est pas des moindre, c'est le cas des exemples 45, 46, 48 et 51.

4.3. Le maintien en position C2 de la consonne /d/ dans un terme trisyllabique

	kóonzime		baka	gloses
(52)	è-dìb	(ouvrir)	èdìφà	<i>clef</i>

Il y a dans cet exemple (52) une tentative d'intégration phonologique en procédant au remplacement de *b* final par *φ* auquel est ajoutée une voyelle finale; il y a également eu en initiale, l'ajout du coup de glotte afin de respecter la structure syllabique CVCVCV propre au baka. Cependant, le phonème *d* n'occupe jamais la position C2 dans les trissyllabes CVCVCV. Ainsi, pour une parfaite intégration en baka, il devait se faire remplacer par un autre phonème mieux adapté à cette position.

VI. Quel impact sur les systèmes phonologique et morphologique du baka ?

Dans le domaine des emprunts baka au kóonzime, l'analyse phonologique nous a permis de recenser, sur les 122 termes, 26, soit 21, 31%, qui se sont démarqués des critères d'intégration. L'influence de cette démarcation n'a pas été des moindres sur le système linguistique baka. En effet, si Phillips (1981) et Kilian-Hatz (2000), affirment que la syllabe baka est essentiellement ouverte, il n'en demeure pas moins que de nos jours, on retrouve dans la langue des syllabes fermées : dans le corpus recueilli entre 2009 et 2011, on dénombre 08 termes, soit 6,57% du corpus, arborant la structure syllabique CVC. Ce phénomène nouveau s'observe aussi dans la variante baka parlée au Gabon. Selon Paulin (2010 :75), cette conservation est due au fait que, les Baka parfaitement bilingues dès le jeune âge, ont entre autres assimilé deux systèmes phonologiques.

Ainsi, ils passent du baka au fang sans toutefois éprouver la moindre gêne. Compte tenu de ce que les Baka, où qu'ils se trouvent parlent la langue de leurs voisins, cette explication pourrait aussi être valable pour les Baka de Lomié (Est-Cameroun), qui sont, tout comme les autres, bilingues *baka - kóonzime* dès le jeune âge. Ceci est d'autant plus vrai qu'à côté de la syllabe fermée, prennent place des sons inexistant dans le tableau phonologique baka ; il s'agit de : /p/, /mv/, /nt/, /ɲk/, /tʃ/, /ɲ/ et /r/. On peut également noter le maintien du coup de glotte en position médiane et finale alors que dans la langue on le rencontre toujours en initiale et jamais ailleurs.

	1	2	3	4
Ouvertes	V	CVCV	CVCVCV	CVCVCVCV
	CV	CVV	CVCVV	CVCVCVV
	CVC		CVVCV	

Tableau 2.6: Impact des emprunts sur la structure syllabique

		Labiales	Alvéolaires	Palatales	Vélaires	Labio-vélaires
Glottales		ʔ	dʔ		ʔ	
Sourdes		p	t	tʃ	k	kp
Sonores		b	d	dʒ	g	gb

mi-nasales	sonores	mb	nd	ndʒ	ŋg	ŋgb
	Sourde	mv	nt		ŋk	
Nasales		m	n	ɲ	ɲ	
Continues		ɸ	s	j	h	w
Latérales			l			
Battue		r				

Tableau 2.7: Impact des emprunts sur le tableau phonologique des consonnes

VII. Conclusion

Une analyse d'un échantillon de 122 termes baka empruntés au kóonzime, nous a permis d'avoir un point de vue général sur leur intégration linguistique.

Nous avons pu identifier cinq domaines sémantiques où apparaissent ces emprunts, dont le plus important est celui de la vie sociale. L'analyse a montré que le plus grand nombre des emprunts baka au kóonzime sont intégrés sur le plan linguistique, en tout 96 des 122 termes (soit 78, 68%). Ce pourcentage élevé montre la facilité qu'il y a pour les Baka à intégrer les termes étrangers dans leur système propre. Il se trouve cependant qu'avec le temps, ces procédures d'intégration se modifient; le remplacement des semi-nasales sourdes et les consonnes finales par exemple ont tendance à ne plus être réalisées, les jeunes pratiquant les deux langues, réalisent ces phénomènes qui étaient étrangers à leur système phonologique. C'est pour cette raison qu'on a un pourcentage de 21,31% termes non intégrés, avec pour les uns la conservation de la syllabe fermée, et pour les autres le maintien de certains phonèmes kóonzime inexistantes en baka. Ces éléments inadaptés au baka, attestent, non seulement du contact entre les Baka et les Kóonzime, mais aussi et surtout du dynamisme de la langue baka.

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ⁱLe fang est une langue bantoue A 75 parlée au Cameroun, au Gabon, au Congo et en Guinée Equatoriale (Essono 2000 : 15).

¹¹Terminologie musicale et paroles des chants enregistrés par Susanne Furniss 1999-2002.

ⁱⁱⁱPendant la colonisation, l'ewondo était respectivement choisi par les Allemands pour la scolarisation et par les missionnaires pour l'évangélisation des différentes tribus camerounaises. De ce fait, cette langue devint la langue véhiculaire de plus de trois millions de locuteurs et vit son influence s'étendre au-delà de ses frontières naturelles (Essono 2000 : 12). Ceci permet de justifier la présence des termes ewondo en baka.

^{iv}J.M.C. Thomas est citée par Bahuchet (1992 : 72)

African proverbs and development

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I. Introduction

Proverbs form an important part of African life as people interact with one another in society. Local African proverbs can therefore serve as a window through which we can look into the life and culture of a specific people. Proverbs, by their form and genre, are often religious in that they usually reveal the worldview of the people and thus, their belief system and social values.

In our study of African proverbsⁱ we shall seek to answer a number of questions, foremost among them being: How do proverbs contribute to the development of individual members of a given African community? What is the observed role of African proverbs in the development of the society? In order to answer these important questions, we shall seek first to answer basic questions that will carry us towards our goal. Proverbs being a genre of language in general, we shall study their structure, to fully appreciate their linguistic beauty as well as the meaning they mediate.

II. The nature of proverbs and theoretical frame

Proverbs are found in every society. Some proverbs have common origins that can be traced from Greek and Roman antiquity and have been translated from Latin and Greek texts into European languages. (Mieder 2004: 11) gives some of these proverbs that are identifiable in various languages, as for example: "Where there is smoke, there is fire," (in 54 languages) and "Walls have ears," (in 46). However, there are also regional or culturally specific proverbs. This is why we can talk of African proverbs: *The Wisdom of Africa*, for example, is a collection of "the most perceptive, poignant and amusing" proverbs,

representing every country of Africa, published by the World Service of the BBC (Lewenstein 2002: 7).

It is not easy to define or say precisely what a proverb is, but generally it can somehow be recognized by users, as this often quoted sentence by (Taylor 1931: 3) tells us, 'An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not.' And he adds that, 'a proverb is a saying current among the folk.' (Simpson 1996), in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*, says, 'A proverb is a traditional saying which offers advice or presents a moral in a short and pithy manner.' Mieder (2004: 4) gives a definition which captures the main characteristics of proverbs:

Proverbs [are] concise traditional statements of apparent truths with currency among the folk. More elaborately stated, proverbs are short generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorisable form and that are handed down from generation to generation.

The important matter here lies in the concept of traditionalist which includes currency and age, i.e., usage over time. We will understand the nature of proverbs more as we progress in our study.

Proverbs form part of the whole area of African folklore or oral literature and so their study reveals not only literary and linguistic values but also cultural, religious and moral values.

Since proverbs touch on several disciplines at the same time—basic linguistics, semantics, language and literature, cultural anthropology, religious studies, etc.—there is no one theory of any one discipline that will completely handle them, as rightly stated by (Honeck 1997: 5), 'There is no overarching theory of proverbs. Instead, different views have emerged.' We have therefore adopted the views methodology proposed by Honeck. We shall use the following views: The formal view, which describes the linguistic and 'semantic-logic properties of proverbs,' the cultural view, which considers proverbs as 'cultural linguistic products, created and used in social situations

for social purposes... [And] entail codification of important lessons in the culture' and the religious view which sees proverbs as religious texts or wisdom that teach how people should live well in society. We will also make use of the practical view, which will enable us to see some of the practical uses of proverbs: counselling (psychotherapy) and teaching (of values and attitudes) for life and welfare. Aspects of the theory of communication shall help us see how proverbs are used, thereby signalling different shades of meaning. The meaning of a proverb depends immensely upon its pragmatic context and so we must make use of contextual information to accurately describe its meaning.

The meaning of an utterance does not reside only in the meaning of the individual words and how they are strung together in a sentence, that is, its grammaticalness. All this involves the linguistic knowledge that a hearer needs to have. But to be able to adequately interpret the meaning of the utterance, the hearer needs the non-linguistic knowledge of the environment, the knowledge of his world—the cognitive environment. The difference between the knowledge of the language and the knowledge of the world around the speaker/hearer underlies the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. Relevance theory seeks to explain the interaction between these two types of knowledge to bring out the intended meaning of a speaker. We therefore need the help of an adequate pragmatics theory. Pragmatics contributes greatly to our understanding of utterances (Blackmore 1992).

A pragmatic theory will therefore enable us to explain how people understand utterances. This is important for understanding proverbs and so we shall draw on relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986 and Blass 1990) to explain how people in the community understand the meaning of proverbs.

III. The structure of proverbs

As we have seen that one of the defining characteristics of the proverb is its traditionality, it follows that there must be

something in its form and structure that makes it recognizable by the native speaker. The grammatical structure of proverbs accounts for the rhythm they carry. With some proverbs one just needs to start a part of the proverb and people will finish the rest of the proverb or they will give other proverbs of similar structure. Mfonyam (2002) describes the structure of Bafut proverbs. Proverbs in Bafut might be recognized by the use of introductory words or phrases as in the following example:

(1) Bìtaà bì'inè lè sɪ swoŋ mə... "Our fathers used to say..."

In Bafut we will find the various grammatical forms of the language in the proverbs. Proverbs would choose some specific structure because of its effect.

In general, the structure of proverbs will follow the grammar of that language. However, the proverbs of a particular region will have certain characteristics in common. (Jean Cauvin 1981) presents some of the grammatical forms that characterize African proverbs. They have in general one sentence, a subject and verb, and optionally complements. Negative constructions are more frequent in African proverbs.

The style or structure of Bafut proverbs is characterised in general by the poetic form and imagery in which many of the proverbs are expressed. In general, proverbs are figurative in form and expression and so we will find both similes and metaphors.

(2)

(a) O fɪŋkə tsi'ì tsɔ̃ àbɛ̀ɛ̀ fu'u ŋkwɛtə forə a mɪnɪi?

"You are as confused as a rat which has met dawn in the middle of the floor."

(b) Àtì nɪlwèn a bə aa mû.

"The walking stick of an old person is a child."

IV. The meaning of proverbs

In discussing the cultural view of proverbs, (Honeck 1997: 32) says the fact that proverbs are familiar to the speakers leads

to the assumption that both the literal format and the figurative meaning of the proverb are pre-stored. This further leads to the assumption that proverb meanings are fixed and automatically accessed and so this tends to foster the conclusion that pragmatics theory is irrelevant to understanding of proverbs. This is not wholly true since we shall see that though, because of usage and familiarity, the meaning of a proverb can be known to the native speakers, the meaning of a proverb is not always apparent and so the context of usage must be taken into consideration.

In our study of Bafut proverbs we have come to see that the meaning of a proverb depends not only on the words used in the proverb but it includes also the context of use, i.e., the background information, cultural and historical, and the intention of the author. We therefore need relevance theory for a better understanding of proverbs. Unger (1996), in a study of proverbs and relevance, concludes, 'that proverbs can be analysed within the framework of relevance theory appealing to fundamental notions such as interpretive use.' Therefore, using the principle of context and relevance we can better understand how hearers interpret the meaning of proverbs.

The context of an utterance or the cognitive environment (Sperber and Wilson 1986) is, 'the subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world.' The hearer has information about his environment that he uses to understand the meaning of the proverb. It is supposed that the audience or people in a community have information or principles that help them to get the intended assumptions or meaning of the speaker. The difficult task is to see how the hearer manages to select the actual speaker-intended assumptions from all he could use from his cognitive environment, i.e., 'the set of facts that are manifest to him.' In Bafut and other African proverbs both the cultural and the historical contexts are used to determine the meaning of the proverbs. A typical example can be seen in the following proverb:

(3) Mu nàà yòŋə aa nì òtoo ma.

“The young one of an animal crosses the stream where the mother animal crosses.”

The literal meaning of the proverb, the mother and child crossing a stream, is not what is in focus but the figurative or metaphorical meaning. The intended meaning of the speaker is that the parent models behaviour, and thus character, before the children. There are a number of factors that go into computing the meaning of the utterance: Animals and the action of crossing interpreted to mean people and their behaviour; mother standing for parents (including the father); the act of crossing, signifying behaviour or character. It is therefore crucial to look at the context in order to derive the intended meaning of the proverb. This proverb is found in other languages with different forms that reflect their different cultures and therefore contexts:

(4)

a. Bafia (Cameroon): “It is the mother that teaches sorcery to the child.”

b. English: “Like father, like son.”

c. German: “The apple does not fall far from the apple tree.”

From these examples we see the constraints of culture and the cultural context on the understanding of the meaning of proverbs. The same proverb can occur in different languages or cultures with different forms and the interpretation of the figurative meaning is highly constrained by the cultural context. These proverbs will be meaningless outside their specific cultural contexts.

The historical context also needs to be taken into consideration in order to account for the meaning of proverbs as can be seen from the following Bafut example:

(5)

a. Bìrè ghò tì mbisè m̀bɔŋ mə akə?

“What good is your cam wood powder without a person to spoil it?”

In the past, people went bare body, and body and skin beauty was admired by all. Women would adorn themselves with the red powder of cam wood. This was normally ground and reduced

to fine powder and mixed for body lotion. A woman with little children would of course have to live with the reality that their beauty cam wood would at times be “spoiled” as the children would climb on her and dirty it! However, it is better to have children who would “spoil” your body beauty, than to be childless! Thus the proverb!

V. The cultural view of proverbs

The cultural view looks at proverbs from the sociocultural contexts and the benefits to society. Important lessons of the culture are codified in the proverbs. Proverbs contribute to the on-going change and development of both language and culture. As a repository of culture and language, since they have been passed down from generation to generation in an oral tradition, they have preserved important aspects of the culture and also earlier stages or forms of language. The collection and subsequent study of proverbs has been the focus of several recent conferences held in Africa, some resulting in works like the collection of proverbs edited by (Nussbaum 1986).

Proverbs have been used in the teaching of native language and also to teach cultural traditions and values to students in foreign-language classes. Textbooks on the teaching of foreign languages normally would include proverbs with explanations and application exercises, as (Mieder 2004: 147) confirms, ‘For English this began in the Middle Ages when Latin proverbs were used for translation exercises and to teach children moral precepts.’

Proverbs are products of their culture and are thus more meaningful in their culture. Proverbs are therefore more effective and impact more on the people in their culture. (Moon 2009) in his study of Builsa (in Ghana) proverbs found that indigenous proverbs had more effect on the people than foreign or non-Builsa proverbs. The Builsa people did not respond to proverbs in English as they did to the proverbs in their language and culture.

Since the cultural view and cultural values are intimately related to the worldview and traditional religion of the people,

some aspects of the cultural view of proverbs shall be dealt with when we talk about the religious view later on.

VI. The practical view

It is sometimes argued that proverbs are a thing of the past and that they are no longer used today. It might be current thought among young people who are being influenced by the market economy, mass communication and the social media that tend to promote illiteracy and light-hearted entertainment. But if we want to promote educational wisdom, the teaching of cultural and moral values, literary skills and the beauty of language, we need to promote the study and use of proverbs in our schools. What are the practical uses of proverbs? In various communities and across time, some of the practical uses of proverbs have included counselling (psychotherapy) and teaching (of values and attitudes) for life and welfare. Clinical counsellors are seriously considering the use of proverbs for therapy.

The role of proverbs in pedagogy and language teaching cannot be questioned for proverbs have been used as teaching tools for centuries. (Orkin 1978) says that the pedagogical and didactic use of proverbs for English continued into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Proverbs have been used to teach social skills and moral values. Proverbs contain a lot of educational wisdom and so have been used in child rearing, for religious education, for literary studies and for communication effects. Teaching proverbial wisdom to children can be one of the ways of preparing the young to build a better society with the hope of a healthy economy and sustainable development. A study done by (Mieder and Holmes 2000) on the teaching of proverbial wisdom to children, and cited by (Mieder 2004: 147) gives us this hope:

The study shows that the developmental stage of fourth graders might be the perfect time to confront students with the character-building values of proverbial laws of life. The fact that they learned proverbs, that they can employ them in meaningful contexts, and that they act according to their wisdom is proof

that children age 9 to 10 can cope with abstract and metaphorical proverbs as rules of moral conduct.

As we will see in the next section, the book of Proverbs was written to give practical guidance to the people of Israel in their daily life so that they would live a life that was harmonious and pleasing to God. The book of Proverbs is the most practical book in the Bible. It was written to teach and to instruct in wisdom and righteous living. The purpose of the book is given right at the opening:

(6) That men may know wisdom and instruction, understand words of insight, receive instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; that prudence may be given to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth. The wise man also may hear and increase in learning, and the man of understanding acquire skill, to understand a proverb and figure the words of the wise and their riddles. (Prov. 1:2-6)

The literary style of the book of Proverbs brings out both the beauty and value of the language of proverbs. The careful wording of proverbs paints a picture. Pictures do not only bring out the beauty but also the force and therefore the effect of language when skilfully used. This skilful use of language can be seen in the following proverb:

(7) A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprove to a listening ear (Prov. 25:11-12).

As can be seen in the above example, the rhythm, rhyme and the imagery of the proverb does not only bring out the beauty of the English language but makes the message of the proverb attractive and inspirational. This is what makes the proverb effective. When people are inspired, action will likely follow. People have been moved to action and even to wage a war just because of the way a skilled writer or orator has exploited the beauty and force of language. Winston S. Churchill, who became prime minister and minister of defense from 1940-1945, used his power of rhetoric to rally the British Empire, the United

States and many other countries to fight against Hitler and his forces. He used proverbial expressions at times of dramatic historical events, such as the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbour, to move people to war. His speech to the House of Commons on 13 May 1940 has become proverbial. Commenting on what has become proverbial, 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat,' (Mieder 2004: 201-202) writes:

With this statement Churchill electrified not only members of the House of Commons, but also the entire British nation and free peoples throughout the world who heard it broadcast on the radio waves...The novelty of the famous phrase, however, rests only in the fact that Churchill made a quadratic and rhythmic structure out of the triad of "blood, sweat, and tears" which he himself had used in *The World Crisis* (1931) to describe the valiant struggle of the Russian armed forces during World War I: "These pages [...] record the toils, perils, sufferings and passions of millions of men. Their sweat, their tears, their blood bedewed the endless plain."

We thus see that language is a vehicle of emotions that can be used for good or bad. The Bible, using metaphors that describe the power of the tongue-tongue standing for language-sums this up in the following descriptions:

(8)

a. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. (Prov. 18:21)

b. And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is an unrighteous world among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the cycle of nature, and set on fire by hell... but no human being can tame the tongue-a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:6, 8)

A Nigerian Proverb expresses the same idea:

(9) There is no venom like that of the tongue.

There are proverbs that advise against the negative use of the tongue and enjoin a constructive use of the tongue. The following Ethiopian proverb tells us how to watch our speech:

(10) He who guards his lips guards his life.

The Bible has similar proverbs:

(11)

a. He who keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. (Prov 21:23)

b. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. (Prov. 15:1-4)

Africans use a lot of proverbs in social interactions as we can see portrayed by Chinua Achebe in his books, particularly in *Things Fall Apart* where there are twenty-nine (29) proverbs. Why does he use proverbs a lot in his writings? The first proverb in the first chapter of *Things Fall Apart* answers this question: 'Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.' Indeed, among the Ibos of Nigeria, the appropriate use of proverbs in conversation is the core of the speech act and a highly coveted language use skill. Among the Buli people as (Moon 2009: 38) reports, 'proverbs are considered 'sweet talk' (Moon 2004) that is highly esteemed and appreciated.' The Builsa people also love and use proverbs a lot. (Moon 2009: 38) gives the following testimony, 'One Builsa said, "When you speak in proverbs, it is like you are singing a song that I want to hear. You can sing that song all day long and I will listen."'

Proverbs need to be taught since they belong to the common knowledge of native speakers and are an effective device of communication. They are effective in communicating wisdom and knowledge about human nature and traditional ethics. More and more people, aware of the pedagogic and didactic value of proverbs, are calling for them to be taught in schools. Parents use proverbs to advise or warn children. It is often taken for granted that proverbs, being part of language and culture, are more or less learned in the normal process of language acquisition.

However, since we still have to teach language to children, proverbs need also to be taught to children. The World Service of the BBC, in its daily programme, *Network Africa*, did a good job by promoting the use of African proverbs. Each day the thought for the day was presented in an African proverb and this enabled

listeners to think about the wisdom taught by the proverb. We have published a collection of over five hundred Bafut proverbs (Ntumngia and Mfonyam 2004). The interest people have shown in this publication is an indication that people are interested in knowing more about proverbs. In the Bafut pedagogical materials, we have included proverbs in our primers and readers, using them to teach values about life.

VII. The religious view

Religion is concerned with matters of life—how people should live—matters of life and death, justice, judgment and retribution. Proverbs that are found in sacred writings of world religions have been widely published and studied as a universal expression of wisdom. In Africa, proverbs are religious texts because they are sanctioned by the ancestors and are therefore spiritual. (Moon 2009:35), who has verified this fact among the Builsa people of Ghana, says:

I have heard Builsa say that people will not take you seriously if you do not know and use proverbs in speech. The proverbs carry forward the authority of the ancestors, which gives weight to the ethos of the messenger.

Looked at from this perspective, proverbs are inspired and so deemed revealed wisdom. Proverbs are normative and so touch not only on matters of religion but also on law and justice. Proverbs are legal texts and so have force of the law. Since religion deals with aspects of the life of people in society, the health and the moral life and welfare of people, they deal with practical issues. In this way, the practical view and religious view of proverbs may be similar approaches and so could both be termed the social view or approach to the study of proverbs in general.

All religions have used proverbs to express religious values—what constitutes good and bad behaviour. There are proverbs in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus used proverbs a lot in His teaching. Some of these are:

(12) a. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave. (Mt 20:26-27)

b. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. (Mk 10:25)

The book of Proverbs has a lot about parent/child relationship and instruction about children upbringing:

(13) My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck. When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the ways of life. (Prov 6:20-23)

(14) Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. (Prov 22:6)

There are proverbs which teach the ethical, moral and spiritual values that promote good character and integrity. These proverbs teach values that lead to health, welfare, good governance, economic development and success and prosperity.

(15)

a. A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favour is better than silver or gold. (Prov 22:1)

b. The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honour and life. (Prov 22:3-4)

c. Without counsel plans go wrong, but with many advisers they succeed. (Prov 15:22)

d. He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys. (Prov 18:9)

e. He who robs his father or his mother and says, "That is no transgression," is the companion of a man who destroys. (Prov 28:24)

f. He who is greedy for unjust gain makes trouble for his household, but he who hates bribes will live. (Prov 15:27)

g. Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel. (Prov 20:17)

h. Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine, those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. (Prov 23:29-32)

i. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink; lest they drink and forget what has been decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. (Prov 31:4)

j. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond, and want like an armed man. (Prov 6:10)

African proverbs, which in some aspects can be compared to the proverbs in biblical books, such as we have seen in examples (5) to (14), are full of religious wisdom and teaching and so can help build the character of individuals, maintain and even raise the moral standard of citizens and the ethical values of the society, fundamental characteristics that are necessary for true, reliable and sustainable economic development.

African proverbs, just as the biblical proverbs we have seen above, give advice about parent/child relationship, obedience and good relationship. The following Bafut proverb advises children about their responsibility to their elderly parents:

(16) àtì nìlwèn à nì mû. "The walking stick of an old person is the child."

Children need to support their aging parents and provide all they need. Children who listen to their parents' advice and obey them are blessed and so grow up to be responsible people in society. These same values are also taught in the Bible: 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise)' (Ephesians 6:1-2). 'If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their

own family and make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God' (1Timothy 5:4).

Parents would want to warn their children lest they miss parental blessings. This message is passed to the young in the form of a proverb as follows:

(17) Mûṅkhê tì tsènè òbòò taà yì, kǒ yò òsaansê!

"You, a child who does not take to the father's advice, take yours and throw it away."

This proverb is used in a very serious and important situation when a child needs to be cautioned against a cause of action that might lead to his missing an opportunity or end in misfortune. When the child has been advised and told what he must do to turn round his fortune, the proverb will be cited as a warning. This proverb is equivalent to the proverbial saying of Jesus, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear,' (Mk 4:9) or 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches' (Rev 2:11, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). This proverbial saying was usually uttered after a serious teaching or warning to His audience. A proverb of Sierra Leon drives this point home very strongly:

(18) Ears that do not listen to advice, accompany the head when it is chopped off.

Callaway (1984), writing about the legal use of proverbs, talks about the use of proverbs among the Kru who inhabit the coastal region of Eastern Liberia, and cites M. J. Herskov who found that the proverb was used frequently in the correction of children and in warning them against misbehaviour:

(19) "He who listens attentively is the one who understands"

This saying was used in a situation in which a child had not paid attention when being advised. Similarly, some proverbs are used to rebuke adults when they have done something wrong.

Ojo Arew and A. Dundes (cited by Callaway 1984) have done the same kind of work with the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria. Yoruba proverbs are used to direct children's behaviour and to teach them correct relationships between themselves and older people. They also found that when Yoruba parents

themselves require advice, one elder may recite a proverb to another elder (perhaps a husband to his wife or vice versa).

There are proverbs that warn people in situations of life and death. If there is danger and people tend to look at a life threatening situation lightly, a proverb will be a more effective means to warn such people. The following Bafut proverb serves as an example:

(20) Nàà tì yu'ù m̀b̀è̀ǹǹè à nì yì ìkò.

“An animal that does not hear the bell of a hunting dog is one to be caught.”

The book of Proverbs has a similar proverb: ‘A prudent man sees danger and hides himself; but the simple go on, and suffer for it.’ (Prov 22:3).

In the administration of justice in the society proverbial wisdom is the more appropriate form to use. When the elders sit to judge a case, it is supposed that they need wisdom and so they count on traditional wisdom, which is indeed wisdom that has been passed down by the ancestors—and enshrined in proverbs. In this context it is believed that the ancestors are present in the judgment that is given. They also believe that anyone who has been accused innocently will be defended and proved innocent by the spirits of the ancestors and so the following proverb will be cited:

(21) Kaa ǹb̀ù̀m̀ n̄ɛ'ɛ s̄i n̄jo tu.

“An empty stomach does not pay a fine.”

The origin of this proverb lies in the past and comes from the administration of justice among the people of Bafut. If the crime was serious, like the theft of valuables or the destruction of life or property in the community, to prove the guilt or the innocence of the the person or individuals suspected of the crime, a rite would be performed. A person accused wrongly should not worry because divine justice would be shown. The curse that rightly follows a guilty person will not fall on the innocent. A person who stood accused was made to drink a potion (n̄n̄ô ìgòr̀è, “to drink potion”) which causes harm to the guilty person. Or another ritual (n̄ts̀è, “mortal curse”) is performed. In this rite,

an animal is killed and the person who has committed the crime is cursed to die or suffer from a horrible disease, like swelling up. A parallel in the Jewish culture is seen in the biblical example of drinking the bitter potion to establish the guilt of an adulteress (Numbers 5: 11-28).

In this case the rite prescribed was, in effect, an appeal to God to determine the guilt or innocence of the suspected party. An equivalent biblical proverb is, 'A curse that is causeless does not alight' (Prov 26:2). We can see that proverbs were used in administering justice among the Jews. In effect, (Callaway 1984) says that Gemser (1953) hints that proverbial wisdom was the framework for the administration of justice in Israel.

There are African proverbs that advise people in their life regarding moral and spiritual values, both virtues and vices that affect economic activities—planning, hard work, unity, sacrifice, bribery and corruption, etc.—as can be seen in the following example:

(22)

- a. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail (Malawi)
- b. United, we are rock, divided we are sand (Madagascar)
- c. One hand cannot tie a bundle (Bafut, Cameroon)
- d. If you are filled with pride, you won't have room for wisdom (Tanzania)
- e. He who guards his lips guards his life (Ethiopia)
- f. A cockroach cannot be innocent in a court where the hen is judge (Cameroon)
- g. When a man smiles when he's been robbed he has stolen from a thief
(The Gambia)
- h. No sweat, no sweet (Ghana)
- i. Pray for good harvest, but keep on hoeing (Tanzania)
- j. We do not ask for wealth because he that has health and children will also have wealth (Ibo, Nigeria).

Since proverbs are collective wisdom and have the force of religious texts, they can influence behaviour and change of attitudes.

VIII. How do proverbs contribute to development?

In considering how proverbs contribute to development it would be good to explain what we mean by development here and what kind of development we are looking at. Development in our context here simply means healthy growth that benefits a community and its members. We will look at it holistically, taking into consideration the development of people, African languages and cultures, and national economies.

As regards people, we consider the fact that the individual can develop or grow physically, emotionally, socially, morally and spiritually.

People often mistakenly look at development mainly in terms of the economy, and thus there are “developed” or “developing” economies. When we talk of “developed” and “developing” nations we think of high-rise buildings, technology and well managed sustainable economies. Our thesis is that social, moral and spiritual development is necessary for the success and sustainability of the economic and technological development of any nation. We also assume that language development is necessary to connect the wisdom of the ancestors with the appropriation of new knowledge and technology.

Talking about the impact of proverbs, (Moon 2009:9) reports that in his research, he saw that proverbs in the mother tongue and culture of the Builsa evoked more response than the biblical proverbs that are in English, a foreign language. He states:

While *yam wamagsima* can be roughly glossed as the English word “proverbs,” non-indigenous proverbs, including biblical proverbs, do not affect a Builsa audience the same way. *Yam wamagsima* are unique expressions of Builsa culture that often invoke strong emotional responses among the Builsa, whereas biblical (and other) proverbs do not typically evoke the same response.

If the languages of African nations are developed to accommodate and appropriate new technologies, this will contribute to sustainable economic development and growth. Concepts are better grasped when these are in the language of

the people because many more people understand their mother tongues better than a foreign official language, like English or French, widely used in Africa.

We have seen in sections IV and V above that proverbs contribute in various ways to the development of language. Proverbs enrich language, for example, by encoding and stabilizing forms of language at various stages of language and culture change. Proverbs help children (and learners of a foreign language) in language acquisition and the development of language skills. We cannot overstate the contribution that proverbs make to the richness of language with regard to style and beauty in language use. Rao, talking about Achebe's use of proverbs in his novels, recognizes the contribution of proverbs to the Ibo language and culture:

Achebe's novels also provide the world a way of perceiving Black Aesthetics. The wisdom and philosophy, the poetry and beauty, of traditional Africa are impressively subsumed in his fiction. For example, according to Ibo culture, a good speaker is he who uses traditional proverbs, with skill and wisdom...In all his novels Achebe makes prolific use of proverbs and popular adages.ⁱⁱ

In the same way proverbs contribute to the culture of a people. Proverbs are not only repository of culture but they are the vehicles and validators of cultural values. Proverbs are not only the vehicle of culture they are an important part of the cultural heritage of a people. The universality of proverbs and the fact that they have been translated and borrowed generally from major languages and cultures have resulted in the enrichment of languages and cultures. Some of the proverbs of Africa have come from classical languages. "Walls have ears," which is also found in forty-six (46) languages is found in Bafut in a different form:

(23) Mi'i mi kwe'èfɔ̃ mi tswe aa a mbèè ngèè.

"Kwefor's eyes are in the grass."

This proverb teaches people never to do or say any thing against the king or anyone in secret for it will eventually be revealed. A crime can never be completely hidden. Kwefor, the

ruling sacred society, has informants all over the place who inform it on almost every individual and any happening in the society. This proverb has its equivalent in the Bible: 'Even in your thought, do not curse the king, nor in your bedchamber curse the rich; for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.' (Ecclesiastes 10:20)

As we have seen in the examples above and in the preceding sections, the practical use of proverbs contributes to the development of the individual. People grow not only physically but more importantly, they grow emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. It is at this point that they and their communities can develop more economically. We have seen that proverbs are used as pedagogical and didactic tools to teach people moral values and appropriate behaviour in society.

The proverbs in example (22) teach people values that will help them grow economically. When people learn to plan well, work hard, co-operate, live in peace and unity, they will develop and grow economically. Proverbs (cf. 14h and 21j) also teach health matters because people need to be healthy in order to be able to contribute to the economic development of their nation.

Even when people grow economically and build beautiful cities, the cities or nations can crumble from one day to another if moral values are not cultivated. Advanced societies and civilizations have been torn down when moral values break down and selfishness takes the upper hand. When children are not taught and trained or disciplined, they grow up to be destructive. In August 2011, young people went out rioting and burning down shops and houses in London and other cities. When things were out of control, and when parents could no longer control their children, they lashed out at the government. They said things had gone that bad because they were no longer allowed to discipline their children.

Corruption hinders development and this is seen in many countries of Africa where money that would have gone into development projects of nations has been either embezzled or laundered by corrupt individual members of government. The effect of corruption in Africa has been proven by various studies.

A recent one done by Hanson (2009), a case study in Kenya bears this out:

Africa is widely considered among the world's most corrupt places, a factor seen as contributing to the stunted development and impoverishment of many African states. Of the ten countries considered most corrupt in the world, six are in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Transparency International, a leading global watchdog on corruption.

Governments have lost revenues when people have evaded taxes and customs duties. Fighting graft and corruption is a way to promote economic development in Africa. Reducing corruption and graft increases the gross domestic product of nations. Again, Hanson (2009) supports this in the following quote:

Academic research shows that a one-point improvement in a country's Transparency International corruption score is correlated with a productivity increase equal to 4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). "If you attack corruption, it's the best way to attack poverty," Nuhu Ribadu, the former head of Nigeria's anti-corruption commission, told Business Week in June 2009.

And so building a healthy moral society by making use of the truly ethical principles enshrined in and fostered by proverbs addressing the issues of integrity, honesty and transparency will contribute greatly to the economic growth of nations.

The gradual eroding of the moral and spiritual values of communities compounded by increasing secularisation has contributed greatly to dysfunctional families and society in general. Only a return to the moral and spiritual values that formed the ethos of African societies and Judo-Christian religious nations will help bring peace, stability and sustainable development in Africa and the world.

As we have looked at a variety of proverbs from the practical and religious views, we have seen the function of proverbs in the physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual development of peoples. This can also lead to the economic development and prosperity of communities and nations.

IX. Conclusion

In this study we have looked at the role that African Proverbs can play in development. In order to appreciate proverbs and their role in social life and their educational value, we needed to study their structure, aesthetics and their effective use in the communication of ideas and moral values in culture and religion. We have looked at the different views or approaches adopted in the study and understanding of proverbs: the formal view, the cultural view, the practical view and the religious view.

We have seen that proverbs form part of the whole area of African folklore or oral literature and so their study has revealed not only their literary and linguistic values but also their cultural, religious and moral values.

Understanding proverbs, teaching their values to children and fostering the wisdom of proverbs will contribute significantly to sustainable development in African nations.

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ⁱⁱJayalakshmi V. Rao *"Proverb and Culture in the Novels of Chinua Achebe"*

Proverbs as evidence of social inequality in Igbo

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Abstract

Chinua Achebe in his much celebrated novel, *Things Fall Apart* gave a good insight into the definition and role of proverbs in Igbo culture when he said 'proverb is the oil with which they eat words.' More recent studies of Igbo proverbs tend to show that Achebe's statement on Igbo proverbs though insightful and a pioneering one, being one of the earliest formal definitions on the subject, is limited as a definition and restricted in function.

This paper focuses on Igbo proverbs with a view to uncovering its additional roles in the Igbo socio-cultural as well as linguistic environment which may lead to the expansion of its definition and function. Using a number of Igbo proverbs with their apt descriptions and usage in the society, it is discovered that the mastery and competence on the use of proverbs confers certain linguistic cum literary privileges that pedestals them as **unequal** with those that have less or no mastery and competence in the use of proverbs. It is discovered that this linguistic cum literary inequality ultimately translates to a kind of social inequality.

The paper further avers that in the contact between English and African Languages such as Igbo, this phenomena have equally influenced the evaluation and perception of African writers in Igbo and or African (Igbo) writers in English. Our conclusion is that proverbs in Igbo language provide a significant evidence for the determination of Hudson's (1980:5) subjective linguistic inequality which translates to social inequality.

I. Introduction

Research on proverbs has been enormous and extensive, whether proverbs in Igbo or proverbs in other language and socio-cultural groups. In fact, proverb can be said to be one of the sociolinguistic phenomena universal in all languages even though this is not captured in Chomsky's description of language universal in his grammatical theory. Obviously, this tends to be because of his disdain for the inclusion of language use (sociolinguistics) in the analysis of linguistic competence.

(Adeiyongo 2004:253) citing (Ridout and Witting 1967) had commented on the long history of proverb in the classroom as early as the 10th century when proverbs were used in England as a brighter method of teaching Latin. According to him, the commonest proverbs still form part of the background of every English speaking child, and this is recognized in the early stages of modern education, where many and varied uses are made of them. He further pointed out that many generations of children through the 19th century and beyond was expected to improve their minds as well as their writings by having to copy proverbs out in their copy-books.

(Finnegan 1970) had shown that among some societies in Africa, proverbs could be used by an individual for 'comment for persuasion' in an esoteric manner so that it could either deliberately convey ambiguity or only very few people could understand him. Raum in Adeiyongo (2004:254) further posits that among the East Africans: 'From fourteen when a child flies into rage, when he is recalcitrant or violates the code of etiquette, when he makes an assort of himself, when he is cowardly, he hears his actions commented upon in the words of a proverb.'

He believes that such a comment is meant to correct the child so that he could not repeat such a thing the next time as the proverb would have a lasting effect on him. (Ashipu 2006:127) reveals that African proverbs constitute a rhetorical form which offers the speaker and the philosopher a veritable medium for the projection and fulfilment of a variety of socially desired goals. He continued to state that wherever there is doubt about an

accepted pattern of behaviour, stipulated line of action, traditional norms are threatened; there is always proverbs to couch, illuminate and buttress the wisdom of the traditional code of conduct. Ashipu agrees with the universality of the existence and function of proverbs across languages and cultures when he shows what proverb is and means to various societies.

According to him, the Bosman believes that proverbs in conversation are torches in darkness. For the Persians, proverbs are the adornment of speech and the Romans assert that proverbs are salt-pits from which you may extract salt and sprinkle it where you will. For the Igbo proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten, and to the Yoruba, proverb is the vehicle of conversation, when the conversation drops, the proverb revives it. To the Hausa, the proverb is the beginning of words which are taken and fumbled up that a man may not know their meanings. The TIV believe that the most valuable legacy a man can bequeath to a child to enable such a child steer his way through life is not corporal but is terms of instruction in proverbs.

(Mele 2006:4) shows how proverbs can be used to resolve conflicts across the language groups and cultures that use them. This he illustrated with four proverbs from four different language groups as presented below. The proverbs were all translated into English. The language groups are Lesotho, Igbo, Zulu and Hausa.

1. A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow (Lesotho).
2. When the brother's fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's state- (Ibo) sic (Igbo).
3. He who hates, hates himself (Zulu)
4. He that forgives gains the victory (Hausa)

His argument is that such proverbs can be used to broker peace, love, and hospitality among the warring groups in the various societies.

Most of these works on proverbs have not projected proverb as revealing clear linguistic inequality that translates to social inequality which is the central focus of this paper. Though many linguists do not subscribe to the notion of linguistic inequality, but drawing from a number of Igbo proverbs, this research tend to show that linguistic inequality encapsulated in proverbs, clearly exist in Igbo. We will further show how this translates to social inequality. The implication of this is the need for the adjustment of the restricted definition and function of Igbo proverbs to accommodate the emerging role.

II. Linguistic equality vs. linguistic inequality

According to (Hudson 1980:205), linguistic equality postulated by most linguists exists at the level of language structure. On the other hand, linguistic inequality postulated more by non-linguists exist at the level of language use. Structurally, most linguists tend to agree that no language is superior to the other no matter the size of its speakers or the level of its development. This implies that even when a language is not yet described to the point of having orthography or writing system, it still possesses certain rules that govern its operation. For example; affixation and word formation processes, phrasal categorizations, sentence constructions, articulator process pattern and other phonetic/phonological rule operations.

It is in this respect that Chomsky has come up with his universal Grammar (UG) which we describe here as not only an attempt to showcase the unity in diversity among grammatical systems but also the structural equality of the systems.

According to (Uoene 2007:164) a language universal is that every language sound system is made up of significant consonants and vowels. They are significant in that they allow for the discriminate of meanings in collocation with other sounds.

There is no purely linguistic basis to code between the grammars of two completely different and unfamiliar language varieties one considered standard and high variety and another non-standard and low variety.

Linguists like Hudson recognize the existence of linguistic inequality which according to him exists at the level of language use but not at level of structure. In fact he recognizes three types of linguistic inequality which include subjective linguistic inequality, strictly linguistic inequality and communicative inequality. Communicative inequality is concerned with knowledge of how to use linguistic items to communicate successfully instead of just knowing the items. Strictly linguistic inequality as maintained by Hudson relates to the linguistic items that a person knows since the items that one knows reflect the experience one has had, and that people with different experiences know different ranges of items. Subjective inequality concerns what people think about each other's speech.

For some societies people are credited with different amounts of intelligence, friendliness and other such virtues according to the way they speak, evidence from the Igbo society through her proverbs to buttress the authenticity of Hudson linguistic inequality. The evidence from Igbo proverbs could well be relevant in the three types of his inequality especially the subjective inequality.

A. Restricted definition and function vs expanded definition of Igbo proverbs

Chinua Achebe in his much celebrated novel, *Things Fall Apart* gave a good insight into the definition and role of proverbs in Igbo culture when he said 'proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten' (Achebe 1958:5). Achebe's statement on Igbo proverbs though insightful and a pioneering one, being one of the earliest formal definitions on the subject, is limited as a definition and restricted in function knowing that Achebe was neither writing an essay nor dissertation on Igbo proverbs, our categorization of its limitedness in definition and restriction in function is the fact it tend to address only what proverb does in conversation and speech. It garnishes and embellishes both the oral and written expressions of the Igbo native speaker as well as considered a very necessary component of such expression. However, there tend to be a concealment of other aspects of the

definition and function. For example, Bhuvarewar (2004)'s definition of proverbs as:

The most popular figurative expression. A concise familiar phrase or sentence in a given language (Igbo) that contains advice about life, which can serve as a commentary on social practices of a people. It contains folk wisdom, with culture specific generalizations arrived at after observing a particular social practice.

The above definition applies to Igbo proverbs. It goes beyond decorating speech, but contains advice of Igbo people. To comment and criticize the wasteful expenditure lifestyle of a prodigal child or student, the proverbs given below can be employed.

Igbo Prov.: "Nwa akwo n'azu amaghi na ije na ara ahu"

Gloss: The child carried at the back, does not know that trekking is a difficult exercise.

Comment: A child or students whose school fees is paid by the parents does not know the suffering they undergo to do so. That is why the child can want and spend money recklessly.

Igbo prov.: "Otu mkpisiaka ruta mmanu o zuo oha"

Gloss: When one finger touches palm oil, it spreads to other fingers.

Comment: When someone joins his friend to do what is wrong e.g. stealing without asking him to stop when the friend is caught, the punishment that will be meted to the thief will extend to him.

The Igbo proverbs such as the ones above not only contain advice about life but also comments on the social practices of the people. Furthermore, a number of researches have shown the various functions of proverbs which also applies to Igbo proverbs which tend not to be captured in Achebe's statement.

(Mele 2006:2) states that proverbs safeguard a society's way of life by preserving material, social and ideological aspects of a culture, teach diversity of cultures indispensable for the human species to thrive on. It serves as rationalizations of reflective observations of social life, human values and natural phenomena

and as well reveal distinctive world views of the different societies. Specifically, (Ezejideaku 2003) states that Igbo proverbs represent 'the world view of the Igbo society'. Yusuf and (Mathangware 2003) are of the view that 'proverbs are stratagems for dealing with situations'. (Petrova 2003) recognizes that proverbs 'can be used to control and shape a people's view of life'. (Brann 1977b) sees proverbs 'as being relevant for education policy planning and conflict resolution'. (Adeiyongo 2004) reveals that proverbs are 'effective medium through which teaching and moral instructions are carried out'. (Ashipu 2006) recognizes that proverbs 'function as a medium through which unlettered Africans expresses his experience about life'.

The findings of these scholars and others not captured here, as well as the present work, constitute an expanded definition and function of Igbo proverbs. This is because though some of them refer more specifically to other language groups and societies, but are aptly applicable to the definition and functions of Igbo proverbs. Additionally, the work shows that Igbo proverbs reveal the existence of linguistic and social inequality in the Igbo society as shown below.

B. Proverbs as evidence of linguistic inequality in Igbo

It is not always easy to uncover the sociological or sociolinguistic structures that abound in a given society. Only rigorous and extensive research helps to reveal such structural dichotomies that exist in both exotic and urban societies. For example, the discovery that differences between social classes are as clearly reflected in America as they are in Britain though the United States has the image of being much less class conscious, Hudson (2001). Careful analyses of some proverbs in Igbo tend to reveal an identification and conferment of some measure of linguistic inequality on the users of Igbo language. Consider the following examples of such proverbs.

Igbo prov.: "Onye a tuuru ilu kowaaraya, ego eji luo nne ya furu ohia".

Gloss: If a proverb is said to an Igbo native speaker and he did not understand it (expects an explanation), the money (bride price) used to marry the mother is considered a waste or useless.

Comment: The proverb above recognizes and makes a distinction in the Igbo society between

(a) “Onye a tuuru ilu ya ghotaghi ya” and

(b) “Onye a turu ilu o ghotaghi ya”.

(a) Refers to a group of those who do understand proverbs when it is said to them.

(b) Refers to the group of those who do not understand proverb when it is said to them.

By this proverb, the society is categorized into two major distinctive linguistic groups. It also gives a clue to the rating of the two linguistic groups. The linguistic group that understands the proverb when it is said to them, are adjudged to be more competent, fluent and possessing a mastery in the use of the language. The group that does not understand proverbs when it is said to them is adjudged to be incompetent, with little or no mastery in the use of the language. To say that, *ego eji luo nne ya furu ohia* is to say that the person should not exist at all because if “the mother should not have been married,” it means that the person should not have been born. It is a serious castigation and denigration of the linguistic status of those that cannot understand or make use of proverbs.

This position projects a latent rule that associates competence and mastery of Igbo language to be significantly influenced by one’s ability to use and interpret Igbo proverbs. The implication of this is that people in the family, community or society who effectively use proverbs in oral or literal expressions to teach, counsel, admonish and encourage etc., are given more prestigious linguistic status. Such appellations as, “intelligent”, “spokesperson”, “wise person”, “mouthpiece” or “orator” etc., is attached to them.

Though such opinion or judgment that informed this may be flawed or incorrect, it has come to stay; subjective linguistic inequality. Hudson’s subjective linguistic inequality is concerned with what people think about each other’s speech. In some

societies like the Igbo society, some people are endowed with different levels of intelligence, friendliness and other such virtues according to the way they speak. Such judgment based entirely on speech may be quite wrong. Consequently, whatever virtues that are highly esteemed, some speakers are thought to have more of them than they really have, simply because they have the right way of speaking and others thought to have less because their speech conveys a wrong impression.

On the basis of Hudson's second linguistic inequality theory: strictly linguistic inequality, the Igbo proverb we are using, still portrays its manifestation. *Those who do not need any explanation to decode any Igbo proverb* are regarded as possessing some sort of compact vocabulary items that enable them not only able to decode any proverb but also to use any fitting proverb for any situation. They are assumed to possess a special array of rich proverbial terminology uncommon and unfamiliar with others. For example, in some sensitive or special events such as negotiation for traditional marriage rites especially; bride price, burial rites or naming ceremonies where their terminological skill is expedient, their presence or absence could make or mar the event.

In terms of communicative inequality, threatened to be an overlap between it and the strictly linguistic inequality as well as subjective inequality. If one knows enough proverbial terms but cannot use them appropriately either in understanding or in speech or other functional roles, he will be categorized among those "the money used to marry their mother is a waste" (*ego e ji loo nne ha furu ohia*) i.e. lower linguistic rating. Those who know and possess these special proverbial terminology items and apply them in communicative interactions are given high linguistic rating. They use it do decode an almost infinite number of proverbs in the language and also produce an almost infinite number of requisite proverbs in any given situation.

This communicative competence based on their knowledge and use of the proverb recommends them to be chosen as masters of ceremony as well as umpires in coronation, wrestling contests, birth and invocation events etc. Linguistically, they are considered superior to the others and subsequently we shall see

how this translates to social inequality. This Igbo proverb evidently captures all three types of Hudson's linguistic inequality. Another proverb is given and analysed below.

Igbo prov.: "Nwata kwochaa Aka ya nke oma ya na ndi okenye erikota nri"

Gloss: If a child washes his hands very well, he will eat together with the elders.

Comment: This proverb again distinguishes between two groups that exist in the Igbo society namely, (a) the okenye (elders) and (b) nwata (children).

The okenye (elders) used in the proverb is not restrictive and strictly speaking of only elders or old people by age, father, it is a symbolic representation of a distinct linguistic and social group or class. This is also free of the use of the term *nwata* (children) in the proverb. The child (*nwata*) as used is not restrictive strictly in terms of age. It refers symbolically to a lower linguistic and social clans or group when compared with the other. Once again, this proverb recognises the existence of inequality in the Igbo society. The lower stratum represented by the term *nwata* (child) and the upper or higher stratum represented by the term *ndi okenye* (elders).

The proverb further reveals that membership of any of the identified group is only not permanent but also flexible. There is linguistic or social mobility. This implies that one who belongs to the lower linguistic or social group can move up to the higher or upper class or group but not without satisfying certain conditions represented by, "*Ikwocha aka ya nke oma*" (washing the hand very well). There could also be a movement from the upper class to the lower class which is not most desirable by many.

As a matter of fact, the emphasis of the proverbs is on the need for hard work and diligence among the people, which characteristic can move somebody up from the lower class of society to the upper echelon. Linguistic competence (in the sense of our usage in this work) is one of the sustained efforts that could translate somebody from the lower to the upper class. The linguistic competence manifests in the use of the language which

is significantly enhanced by the use of proverbs. An important yardstick in measuring the use of language in Igbo is the apt use and application of proverbs. A young person who grows up showing versatility and in-depth in the knowledge and use of proverbs can easily be elevated to the council of elders or made to speak on behalf of the elders or to speak where the elders speak. He will be eulogized for possessing uncommon wisdom and intelligence. The effort to know, learn and use the proverbs is adjudged to be a process of “*Ikwo aka nke oma*” (washing the hands well) which qualifies him to speak among the elders i.e. promoted to an upper class. Let us consider another Igbo proverb below.

Igbo Prov.: “Otu nne na-amu mana obughi out chi na – eke”

Gloss: One mother can beget many children but all the children will have different destinies.

Comment: This proverb further demonstrates the existence of inequality in the Igbo society. It draws an extreme kind of analogy to reflect the deep noted linguistic and social inequality in the society by positing that even people born of the same mother (parents) may end up becoming unequal in language use and in social standing. It thus appears to be an affirmation of the already known truism in sociolinguistics that ‘no two persons speak alike’ even if they are identical twins because of individual idiosyncrasies that may be occasioned by pitch or voice quality etc. The significance of this is that two people may be twins or of the same parents in Igbo society, may grow up having different levels of competence and ability in the use or understanding of Igbo proverbs. One may be grounded in the use and understanding of proverbs while the other can hardly decode or use a proverbs. As already noted in this work, this will place them in an unequal linguistic standing which will ultimately become also unequal social standing.’

C. The influence of proverbs on literary assessment in Igbo

The use of Igbo proverbs significantly influences the assessment of written compositions in Igbo as well as any literary piece. Expression or language use (*Asusu nka*) is one of

the criteria used to assess any written composition in Igbo language as it is also for English language at all levels of the school curriculum. Appropriateness of language used in writing the composition is one of the determiners of a good composition. This takes a significant part of the marks allocated for the composition among the positive qualities to be looked for under expression (*Asusu nka*) include, clarity and appropriateness of style, for example range and aptness of vocabulary and collocation and judicious use of figurative language etc. In the judicious use of language appropriate use of proverbs and other figurative devices are prominently considered.

A good application and use of proverbs gives a comparative advantage to any student's composition than that of another without appropriate use of proverbs as far as judicious use of figurative language and expression is generally concerned. On the overall, this could impact significantly on the passing or failing of the subject.

Furthermore, in the assessment of a good literary piece in Igbo, one of the criteria is the use of language which also includes the use of proverbs. A number of notable authors whose works are in Igbo language have endeared themselves to the heart of their readers with their mastery in the use of poetry. Such works include Nwaozuzu's *Ajo Obi*, (Drama), Ofomata's *Ugoma*, Achara's *Elelia na Ile o mere*, Nzako's *Aka ji Ako* (prose), Chukwuezi's *Ako by Ndu*, Madueke's *Nka Okwa*, Ofomata's *Echiche m* (poetry). These are purely works written in Igbo language. Even such literary works written English language by Igbo scholars and writers such as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* etc., have a reasonable number of Igbo proverbs. The only difference in that in the books written in English language, the proverbs are translated into English Language.

To assess a number of such literary works written in Igbo, especially in terms of language use, the apt use of proverbs will definitely influence the evaluation. Those with appropriate and sufficient proverbs will definitely stand out better adjudged in terms of appropriateness of style, judicious use of figurative language or expression is genera. Those that made no use of proverbs or made inappropriate use of them will be rated lower

on the same aspects. This will to a large extent affect the overall assessment of the text. One can tend to say then that a significant influence of proverbs on literary assessment in Igbo leads to a kind of literary inequality where one text is considered superior to the other especially in terms of language use.

III. Linguistic and literary inequality as social inequality

Most of what we have done so far in work is to establish how proverbs give insight to and contribute to the existence of linguistic and even literary inequality in Igbo. This sub-section tends to demonstrate that the observed linguistic and literary inequality translates to social inequality. According to (Hudson 2001:215) 'Language, in the form of variety differences, contributes to social inequality by being used as a yard-stick for evaluating people...'

The uses of proverbs serve as yard-sticks for evaluating people and even literary texts. The three types of linguistic inequality posited by Hudson which through proverbs is seen to exist in Igbo society as demonstrated already, reveal an evaluation of people which lead to social inequalities. Those with high linguistic status tend to enjoy high social status while those with low linguistic status tend to be given low social status. Literary texts that are given high linguistic status tend to enjoy high social status and vice-versa.

As observed in the work, on the basis of Hudson's subjective linguistic inequality, we discovered that when somebody has the ability to use and interpret Igbo proverbs in oral and written expressions and in various situations, the people evaluate him as of a high linguistic status. This high linguistic status translates to high social status. He is made to occupy certain socially, privileged positions in the family, village, town or society. Because they are seen to be "wise", "intelligent", "tough" or "learned", "orators", they are placed in a higher social, leadership or societal echelon. They are appointed members of the elder's council, masters of ceremony, spokesman of the people, conflict resolution experts, umpires in traditional rites such as wrestling contests, coronation, birth and naming ceremonies, marriages, invocation/rituals, title/oath taking etc. It is interesting to note

that those who can seldom express themselves in the mother tongue nor who need to be interpreted any proverb given in the language can hardly fill- up such positions. To understand the level of linguistic and social inequality promoted by the use of proverbs in the Igbo society may not be easy to an outsider without a comparative reference to what happens in the large and possibly more formal settings.

In a FIFA recognized football match for example, no person can be appointed a linesman, let alone a centre referee without being FIFA barged. To be a FIFA badged referee, one must have possessed appropriate professional skills, trainings and qualifications. In the Igbo linguistic communities, the appointment or elevation of one into such linguistic and social positions like being an umpire in a tradition wrestling match, being a family spokesman in a two family negotiation of bride price and marriage rites etc. tend not to be based on academic qualification or professional training, but more on linguistic competence which manifests more in their apt use of proverbs. Their knowledge and ability to select appropriate linguistic items in relevant situations and occasions tend to make them socially unequal with others without such ability. The linguistic and social inequalities are further triggered by the ability to use the known and selected linguistic items for effective communication and interaction.

The attempt to know and use proverbs is accepted as one of the social refining processes that one need to undergo to move upwards from a lower social class to an upper social class. People's perception and evaluation of a man or child tend to improve as his knowledge; understanding and appropriate use of proverbs improves in the Igbo society. On the other hand, the perception and evaluation of a man or child tend to decrease as his knowledge, understanding and appropriate use of proverbs decrease. The Igbo proverb gives us an insight into the flexibility of this status movement in the Igbo society. We further understand that linguistic inequality more than biological or genetic relationship enhances social inequality in the Igbo society (*Otu nne na- amu mana obughi otu chi na-eke*). Certain traditional secret societies like the *Okonko*, place premium on

the ability to speak and understand proverbs as one of the significant criteria for admitting members to the group. The social status and role of such societies in the Igbo society cannot be underestimated.

The use of proverbs influences the linguistic status which also influences the social status of a text or another. When an author makes good use of proverbs, he is said to be a “good author” and his text tend to be regarded very highly. The book is recommended or selected for wider use and the author could be recommended and selected for an award in preference for a book or author that did not make good use of proverbs. The literary inequality occasioned by the use of proverbs thus, leads to social inequality.

IV. Conclusion

In addition to what has been said and written about proverbs, in this work, we have seen additional role of proverbs where it reveals and promote linguistic inequality which translates to social inequality. In the Igbo society in particular, knowledge and use of proverbs, tend to be considered more than academic and professional qualifications in the appointment, selection or elevation into prestigious and sensitive positions in the highly traditional settings. In fact in some cases, the admittance of membership into certain cultural societies tends to be restricted to among other things, those with adequate knowledge and use of proverbs.

We therefore conclude that proverbs not only give evidence of linguistic and social inequality in Igbo, but significantly determine the social and literary status to which one belongs. It is not just the palm oil with which they eat words.

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Elements of information highlighting in Aja (Kwa) texts

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I. Introduction

In this paper, I examine the function that certain morphosyntactic constructions play in highlighting various types of information in Aja texts, concentrating on constructions that have not already been well described in the literature on focus structures in the Gbe continuum of languages.¹ I use the term 'highlighting' in the generic sense of increasing visibility or rendering more distinct because the constructions examined in this study include both morphosyntactically marked focus structures as well as a marker which cannot be described as marking focus *per se*, but is instead used to assign significance to a given episode within the larger discourse unit. After an analysis of these various highlighting strategies, I consider some of the correlations that can be observed between certain categories of focus strategies and their relative frequency of use in peak vs. non-peak moments in a discourse.

The definition of focus used in this study is that of Lambrecht, who states that the focus in an utterance is 'the element of information whereby the presupposition and the assertion DIFFER from each other', or otherwise stated, 'the UNPREDICTABLE or pragmatically NON-RECOVERABLE element in an utterance' (1994). It is assumed in this paper that focus can be expressed in syntactically unmarked clauses. There are also specific morphological and syntactic strategies that exist for marking focus. Moreover, a speaker may express focus with reference to units of varying scope, ranging from a particular constituent within the clause to the entire utterance, such as in instances of truth value focus.

The first construction I examine is the *só* “take” sequential serial verb construction, which I argue can function pragmatically to express predicate focus and is used at peak moments in a narrative. I also study the *yí* focus construction in conjunction with the sentence-final deictic particle *nɛ*. The conjunction of these two structures is a strategy used when the scope of focus is the entire clause; specifically, it marks a discontinuity at the conclusion of a smaller discourse unit within the larger text body. Finally, I examine the discourse use of the auxiliary verb *vá* ‘come’, a form which is employed to express the relative importance of a particular episode as it relates to the overarching storyline of a narrative discourse. All of these strategies have in common that they are observable only through the study of texts as opposed to single utterances.

Aja is a Gbe language spoken in the southwest of Benin and the southeast of Togo. It is a Kwa language, identified in Williamson and (Blench 2000) as being most closely related to Gen. The data in this study deal primarily with the Hwe dialect. The text corpus was recorded in the towns of Aplahoue and Azove and included primarily narrative texts. Two non-narrative texts were provided to me as recordings made by a radio station located in the Aja-speaking town of Lalo. All examples which do not include an indication of their source are from my own data.

II. Background: argument and verb focus in Aja

A. Argument focus

Aja has agent-verb-patient (AVP) /subject-verb (SV) word order (Aboh 2004, Aboh and Essegbey 2010). Aja is a tonal language having two underlying tones, with surface mid tone being obtained through various processes of tone spread (Tchitchi 1984).ⁱⁱ

1. *ablá* *xwle* *koklo* *le* *afí* *mɛ*ⁱⁱⁱ
 Abla *buy* *chicken* *at* *market* *in*
 “Abla bought a chicken at the market”.

Focus strategies have been well researched for other Gbe languages such as Ewe, Gun and Fon (Ameka 1992, Ameka 2010, Aboh 2004, Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002), and have been documented specifically for Aja by (Fiedler 1998, 2012). I briefly describe here some of the strategies that have been identified for marking focus in Aja as background to the data and discussion that follow.

There are both unmarked and syntactically marked strategies for expressing argument focus in Aja. An unmarked strategy for expressing object focus is given in (Fiedler 2012) and provided here.

2. Non-subject focus: {What did the woman eat?}

é d̀ù āyú

3SG eat bean

'She ate BEANS.' (Fiedler 2012: 387 ex 2a)^{iv}

Marked focus strategies involve specific syntactic structures. As noted in (Fiedler et al. 2010), there is an asymmetry in the marking of subjects and non-subjects for focus. When the constituent being marked for focus in Aja is the subject, the subject remains in sentence-initial position and is obligatorily marked by the focus marker *yí*. This marker distinguishes the focused subject from a subject that would otherwise by default be interpreted as a topic. For other focused constituents in Aja, the element marked for focus is preposed and is followed optionally by the focus marker *yí*.

Subject and object noun phrases, verbs and obliques may all be syntactically marked for pragmatic focus in Aja. There are generally no resumptive pronouns in marked focus constructions in Aja.^v Examples of marked argument focus as illustrated in (Fiedler 2012) are copied here.

3. Subject focus: {Who ate the beans?}

nyóǹù-ví yí d̀ù-ì

woman-child FOC eat-3SG

'The GIRL ate them.' (Fiedler 2012:387 ex 1)

4. Non-subject focus: {What did the woman eat?}

āyú (yí) é dù
 bean FOC 3SG eat
 'She ate BEANS.' (Fiedler 2012:387 ex 2b)

Interestingly, in my corpus of narrative texts, marked subject or object focus constructions do not have a predictable function with regards to the overall storyline of a narrative. For example, in the following two examples taken from a story about a land dispute, the focus constructions are found in non-storyline utterances. In (5) this construction is in the setting for the narrative, while in (6) it is found in the moral teaching statement that concludes the story.

- (5) ... é nyí tɔgbí-wó nyígban; tɔgbí-wó
 3SG be grandfather-PL land grandfather-PL
- nyígban yí e¹ nyi
 land FOC 3SG be
- '... It was their ancestral land. It was their ANCESTRAL LAND!'

- (6) amɛ ci yí wu amɛ dɛ, enu
 person REL REL.PRT kill person TOP thing
- vón yí e wa-wa
 bad FOC 3SG do-PROG
- 'The person who kills (another) person, he does a WRONG THING.'

In addition to being located in background information and in the concluding moral of a narrative, I have also found marked subject and object focus constructions in reported speech within a narrative, as well as in the storyline of a narrative. Contrary to what one might hypothesize, these *yí* focus constructions involving the preposing of the focused element do not correlate in any significant way with peak moments in the narrative.

Instead, their pragmatic function is related to the fact that this *yí* focus construction is strongly preferred in cases of contrastive focus, a finding illustrated in (Fiedler 2012). Contrastive focus asserts one among two or more alternatives as being the entity for which a given proposition holds (Chafe 1976). This is the pragmatic function I observe for the *yí* focus construction in Aja discourse.

In (7) below, we see the *yí* focus construction combined with a cleft construction. Here, the *yí* focus construction is used to contrast the actions of one character with the actions of other characters. Spider, in this story, remains behind while the other animals move forward into the king's presence. Later, the reason for this reticence is revealed when Spider eventually moves forward and the other animals laugh at him.

- (7) *azan sun* *vɔ, eɣɛyi yí nyí ame*
 date reach.fulfillment COMPL spider FOC be Person

ci	yí	cí	ngbe
REL	REL.PRT	remain	area.behind

'When the date had arrived, SPIDER was the person who remained behind.'

More specifically, the *yí* focus construction can be employed when the speaker wishes to assert the fact that the entity for which a certain proposition holds is a particular subset of a more general category. This subset is specified through the presence of a modifier in the preposed element. This is seen (5) and (6) repeated below for ease of reference.

In (8), the speaker is underlining the relevance of the type of land being disputed. It is not just any land; it is ancestral land and therefore subject to supernatural influences. The speaker underlines this relevance in light of a possible failure on the hearer's part to grasp the significance of this detail.

- (8) ...é nyí tɔgbí-wó nyígbán;
3SG be grandfather-PL land

tɔgbí-wó nyígban yí e nyi
 grandfather-PL land FOC 3SG be

'... It was their ancestral land. It was their ANCESTRAL LAND!'

In (9) the speaker is stressing his point of view that murder isn't just a morally neutral action; it is a morally wrong action.

(9) amɛ ci yí wu amɛ ɖe, enu vón
 person REL REL.PRT kill person TOP thing bad

yí e wa-wa
 FOC 3SG do-PROG

'The person who kills (another) person, he does a WRONG THING.'

B. Verb focus

In Aja verb focus, a copy of the verb is proposed followed by the optional marker *yí* (Fiedler 1998, Fiedler 2012). The verb is then also found in its default position within the main clause. This phenomenon exists in other Gbe languages, although in some cases the proposed element is analyzed as being nominal (Ameka 2010, Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002, Aboh 2004).

As noted in (Fieldler 2012), these verb focus constructions are rare. This observation is borne out in my own text corpus, which contains only one example of this construction, noted in (10).

Here, the verb focus construction appears within reported speech. Because of the rarity of this construction, it is not possible to make generalizations about possible correlations (or lack thereof) between this structure and a narrative storyline. We see in 0, however, that this is another example of contrastive focus. Through divination, the religious specialist is asserting that the person who has recently died was murdered, as opposed to having died of natural means.

(10) bokɔnɔ só efan kɔ dó nyigban,
 religious.specialist take divination.tool pour at land

yí vá tó efan kan-kan, eyí
and come begin divination NOM-search and.then

kpó kékéké mó éé!, kpɔli ci yí
look much COMP ah! shadow REL REL.PRT

tó ye máhun, wu wo wu-í!
go.out now TOP kill 3PL.INDF kill-3SG

"The religious specialist took the cord, threw it on the ground and began divination, and then looked a while and said, "Ah! (According to) the form that has appeared, he was KILLED!"

Having reviewed marked argument and verb focus strategies in Aja, I turn now to a study of those focus strategies that I have discovered through an analysis of discourse-level data.

III. Focus strategies observed through an analysis of discourse

A. An alternate strategy of predicate focus: sequential *só* "take" serial verb constructions

Aja does not have an equivalent to the alternate predicate focus strategy that Ewe has using an utterance-initial predicate focus marker *dɛ* (Ameka 1992). Example 0 shows how this marker is used.

- (11) dɛví- á dɛ- Wò dze anyí
Ewe: child DEF pFOC 3SG fall ground
"The child, she FELL DOWN." (Ameka 1992:5 ex 2c)

However, I have found that the use of a sequential serial verb construction (Lefebvre and Brousseau 2002) using the *só* "take" verb can function to express predicate focus in Aja, with the semantic scope of this focus being on the event described by the entire verb phrase (composed of the serial verb construction, hereafter SVC) rather than on either an argument within the verb phrase or the lexical meaning of the verb itself.

In this particular construction, the sequential SVC using *só* 'take' expresses as A-'take'-P-'take'-V that which in another communication could be expressed as an AVP sequence. In the utterances that precede 0, Spider is tricked into thinking that if he kills and buries his mother, wealth will come to him. He therefore kills his mother. Burial is the last step to the procedure that should bring him wealth.

(12) Eyí e mɔ ahɛn! wo só enɔ-lɔ
 and.then 3SG COMP aha! 3PLtake mother-3SG.POSS

só ɖi
 take bury

'And then he said "Aha!" they TOOK HIS MOTHER AND BURIED (her).'

In (12), the verb *ɖi* 'bury' appears at the end of the utterance rather than in the middle of the utterance, which would be its position if the action were communicated in the pragmatically unmarked AVP sequence: "They buried his mother". This difference in the placement of the verb communicating the primary event is what helps to distinguish this structure from the more common, pragmatically unmarked AVP sequence, given that in both cases, a known or given subject is followed by a verb phrase containing the focus element of the utterance.

In (13), there are actually two series of sequential SVCs. A gloss of the preceding utterance is provided as context to understanding (13).

(13) Context:

'And as Ant arrived there, (he) began biting Snake (who was) on the egg, began biting the snake, and began biting the snake.'

kékéké vɔ, só edan lɔ só wu,
 until ? take snake DEF take kill

eyí sɔ́ aʒin sɔ xɔ nɔ takpɛ
and.then take egg take save for Partridge

'Until finally, (he) took the snake and killed (it) and then
took the eggs and saved (them) for Partridge.'

Example (14) shows how this strategy can result in a sequence of verbs that might seem rather striking to the non-native speaker.

(14) hwanni sɔ́ eho sɔ sɔ́
 pigeon take money take take

'Pigeon took the money and took (it).'

In (15), a woman is speaking of how daughters may be offered in marriage for economic purposes, a practice that is compared to the sale of personal property. In this utterance, one finds the same verb *má* 'divide' in both the subordinate clause and in the independent clause. In the subordinate clause, which does not contain a focused element, the verb *má* is found in an unmarked AVP syntactic structure, whereas in the independent clause, this verb is found in the syntactically marked sequential SVC.

(15) lé wo má nyigbán ɔ,
 how 3PL divide land TOP

wo a sɔ́ eɔ sɔ má ahán hɛnnɛ
3PL POT take 2SG.STR take divide like.that also

'In the same way as they divide land, they will TAKE YOU
AND DIVIDE (you) LIKE THAT ALSO.' (Radio Lalo 2004)

The *sɔ́* predicate focus strategy, illustrated in (14) through (15), is not used to express contrastive focus in any of the examples of this strategy in my corpus. There is no suggestion of there being an opposition between the event described in these focused predicates and some possible alternative event. In (15),

for example, the focused predicate is specifically compared, not contrasted, with the predicate of another proposition.

Could this *só* focus strategy be used to express truth value focus, where the scope of focus is the entire utterance? In most cases in my corpus involving the *só* focus strategy, there is no suggestion of this strategy being used to assert the truth value of the entire utterance; rather, it is the event described in the predicate which is being asserted. However, (15) opens up the possibility of considering this *só* focus strategy as marking truth value focus in addition to predicate focus. Given, however, that this is the only example in my corpus which would lend itself to such an analysis, further research is needed before a more conclusive statement can be made about such an analysis.

The *só* 'take' sequential SVC is not reserved for marking predicate focus. There are certain events that are typically described in Aja using *só* 'take' serial verb construction. These include events in which an instrument is employed to perform an action, as well as events that involve the giving of something using either of the verbs *ná* "give" or *jó* "release, give" in an utterance where the recipient is being specified. An example is given in (16).

- (16) *eyí efyɔ só nyɔnú-ví ló-wó só jó nî...*
 and.then king take woman-DIM DEF-PL take give to.3SG
 'And then the king gave the young women to him...'

Excluding these semantically predictable categories of *só* "take" sequential SVCs, I have found that the *só* "take" sequential serial verb construction correlates positively with peak moments in a narrative. This finding can be contrasted with the previously noted observation that argument and verb focus constructions involving a preposing of the focused element and the optional focus marker *yí* do not correlate with peak moments in a narrative.

Also in contrast with the preposed argument focus strategy, the *só* predicate focus strategy is not found in the response to a question. So while (16) is acceptable at a peak moment in a

narration, (17) is not a felicitous response to either of the questions asked.

(17) Context: Utterance heard in the course of a narration.

é só edan sɔ kpó

3SG take snake take See

'He took a snake and saw (it)!'

(18) Context: What did he do? / What happened?

*é só edan sɔ kpó

3SG take snake take See

'He took a snake and saw (it)!'

When asked why 0 is not a felicitous response, speakers respond that such an utterance requires a preceding statement of context. This intuition is consistent with my findings that the *só* predicate focus strategy correlates with peak moments in a discourse; a peak must necessarily be preceded by non-peak information.

I turn now to another focus construction that is, like the *só* “take” sequential SVC used for predicate focus, observable principally in discourse-level data.

B. The utterance-final particle *nɛ* paired with a preposed focus construction

There is a discourse-relevant structure in Aja which involves the pairing of an utterance-final particle *nɛ* with a preposed focused element that includes a locational reference. When these two structures are paired, the focused element refers to the events or entities described in the preceding discourse unit. These paired structures serve to mark the conclusion of a discourse unit.

Before proceeding with an example of this structure, I present some background data regarding the marker *nɛ*. The deictic particle *nɛ* is used in Aja to indicate a distal item in a presentational sentence (similar to the Fon marker *né* described in Lefebvre and Brousseau (2002)).

(19) Kofi nɛ

Kofi is.there

'Kofi is there.'

(Fiedler 2012) demonstrates that the particle *nɛ* is also found in Aja as an affirmative particle at the end of an utterance, with its function being to affirm and strengthen the utterance's truth value.

(20) Context: He limped, (didn't he)?

éèn, é tón bú nɛ

yes, 3SG limp limping AFF

'Yes, he DID limp.' (Fiedler 2012:392 ex 16a)

The pragmatically-marked structure I describe in this section involves the pairing of this utterance-final marker *nɛ* with a preposed *yí*-marked focus element that includes a locational reference. When these two structures are paired, they mark the conclusion of a discourse unit.

Example (21) appears at the end of a story whose overarching storyline describes how and why the speaker began attending a church.

(21) *hunno-tóxu yí enye ɲ tɔ cóci yi-yi le nɛ*
there-place FOC 1SG.STR 1SG begin church NOM-go at there
'THAT THERE (is when) I began going to church.'

The sentence above could be produced without the utterance-final *nɛ*; in this case, the reference for *hunno-tóxu* "there-place" would be a particular physical location. But with the presence of the final *nɛ* in utterance (21), *hunno* "there" no longer refers to a physical location; it is referring in a metaphorical sense back to the events related in the immediately preceding unit of discourse. Similarly, in both (22) and (23), the morpheme *hunno* "there" is used in a metaphorical rather than a physical sense and refers to entities or events described in the utterances of the preceding discourse unit.

The utterance in (22) marks the end of a discussion of the type of conflicts that the village elders typically resolve.

- (22) meɣanxú hunnɔ-we yí drɛ-ni do nɛ
 elder there-PL FOC repair.3SG-HAB.3SG PRT there
 'Those elders fix it.'

Example (23) appears at the end of a description of how a young girl can be given away in marriage for monetary reasons.

- (23) hwe-hunnɔ-nu yí wo nú-kɔ mɔ nyɔnú
 time-there-at FOC 3PL.INDF say-PROG COMP woman

le ɔɔnmɛ nɔ ɲsu tɛgbɛɛ nɛ
 be.at underside of man always there
 'AT THAT POINT (is when) they say that women are always
 under men.' (Radio Lalo 2004)

The examples described here do, as (Fiedler 2012) notes, affirm the truth value of the utterance. However, the presence of the preposed element including a locational reference in (23) through (24) specifies the function of this particular strategy as affirming the truth value of the utterance specifically as it summarizes a discourse unit.

A similar degree of specificity in function for a structure has been observed by (Ameka 2010) in another Kwa language, Likpe. In this language, the particle *né* appears at the end of inferential constructions, or utterances that explain a discourse discontinuity (of which concluding statements would be one type). It does not seem, however, that the Likpe marker *né* is normally paired with a proposed focus construction as it is in Aja. In the example below, it seems to be paired with a topicalization structure, as indicated by the presence of the morpheme *-a*, which is glossed as a topic marker. One sees also in this structure the presence of a locational reference, *m.fo* 'here'.

(24) nya m.fo tsyá-a mo-fo bó-te
Likpe: CNJ here also-TOP 1SG-can CM-know

 a-ka-té lǎ onanto tíki kú
 IMPERF-give LOC God word COM

 sikúu éto əsúə né
 school POSS skin EMPH

'And here too, (what) I know and can tell about
religion and the school.'

(Ameka 2010)

IV. Pragmatic use of the auxiliary *vá* 'come' as a development marker

Within a narrative, the speaker employs various strategies to highlight the particular pragmatic importance of certain utterances. One such strategy in Aja is the use of a development marker-*a* marker used by the speaker to signal a new development in the story or argument (Dooley and Levinsohn 2001).

In addition to being an independent verb that means “come”, the verb *vá* has been labelled in Ewe as being an auxiliary verb expressing something that will eventually occur (Essegbey 2004, Ameka 2008). Similar analyses have been given for *vá* in Aja (Tchitchi 1984) and in Fon (Tossa 1993).

I have found in my corpus of narrative texts that *vá* plays an additional role in Aja -that of a development marker, signalling a new development in the storyline. Example, 0, is the first sentence of a narrative that has as its main characters a hunter and a buffalo. This utterance provides the background for the story. The following sentence, 0, begins the foregrounded, mainline information. Here, the TAM marking of the verbs switches from the habitual to the unmarked form of the verb. Active verbs in this unmarked form are given a past interpretation; it is this form that is typically used to relate mainline events in narrative.

The event in (26) is the first inciting event in this narrative, and it is here that we see the first appearance of the development marker *vá*.

- (25) *sásá* *megan-wó* *hwe-nu* *ci* *yí*
 Previously elder-PL time-at REL REL.PRT
- wo* *da-nɔ* *ade* *ɔ,* *wo* *yi-nɔ*
 3PL.INDF throw-HAB hunt TOP 3PL.INDF go-HAB
- egbe* *mɛ* *yí* *eto-wo* *dé* *ténɲ* *yí*
 forest inside and buffalo-PL NEG be.capable and
- wu-nɔ* *ade* *o*
 kill-HAB hunter NEG

'Previously in the old days, when one went hunting, one went into the forest and buffalos were unable to kill hunters.'

- (26) *Eyí* *gbe-ɖeka* *ɔ,* *eto* *ɖeka* ***vá*** *tró*
 and.then day-one TOP buffalo one DEV turn
- zun* *nyɔnú-ví*
 become woman-DIM

'And then one day, a buffalo turned into a young woman.'

This use of *vá* is seen in conjunction with both inciting incidents and climactic events. The story below is the continuation of (26), given only in gloss form with occurrences of *vá* (when it is not used in its primary sense of “to come”) highlighted. Here we see that these occurrences of *vá* cannot be interpreted as marking modality—namely an event that will eventually occur. Rather, they are best interpreted as examples of *vá* operating in its function as a development marker.

A. The story of hunter and buffalo

Previously in the old days, when one went hunting, one went into the forest and buffalos were unable to kill hunters.

And then one day, a buffalo *vá* turned into a young woman.

And when she *vá* met a hunter, she said to the hunter that she would marry him, and the hunter accepted.

And she turned and said to the hunter, if it was like that, he should eventually ask for her hand at her father and mother's place...

And when night *vá* fell, she *vá* asked Hunter, when he went hunting, exactly what did he do so that when he went into the forest, the buffalo could not kill him?

And Hunter said that if she was really his, he would explain the thing to her...

[The hunter tells her that he is capable of changing into three different things in order to hide from a buffalo—a termite mound, a tree and a cornstalk. However, because of a warning from his mother, he refrains from revealing the last thing that he is able to change into, which is a butterfly.]

And when the time *vá* arrived for them to go to his mother in law's to ask for her hand, they were walking until they entered the forest.

And his wife said to him that he should wait for her; she would relieve herself and return.

And when she went to relieve herself, she turned back into a buffalo and *vá* charged her husband.

And when Hunter turned into a termite mound, she recognized him and hit him with her horns.

And when Hunter turned into a tree ... [she recognized him].

And when he turned into a cornstalk ... [she recognized him].

And finally, when Hunter *vá* turned into a butterfly, she didn't recognize him anymore.

And then Hunter returned home.

That's why the elders say...

[The story concludes with the teaching that one should never reveal all of one's secrets to one's spouse or to one's siblings; one should keep some secrets to oneself.]

Every one of the instances of the auxiliary *vá* marked above is followed by a verb in its unmarked form. These instances of *vá* mark either inciting events or, in the case of the final instance, the climactic event.

Note that not all foregrounded material is marked with *vá*. The first time the buffalo charges her husband, the development marker *vá* is present; this is a new inciting incident within the story. However, the subsequent three times that she charges, *vá* is not employed. This is presumably because these activities, while still part of the foregrounded material, are part of a single episode in the discourse introduced with the first charge. It when Hunter turns into a butterfly that *vá* is used again. This is again a new development – the climactic moment when we find out whether Hunter will be killed or whether he will survive.

V. Summary and discussion

In this paper, I begin with a background summary of the pragmatically marked strategies used for marking argument focus and verb focus in Aja, strategies involving the preposing of a focused element and the optional use (obligatory in the case of subject focus) of the focus marker *yí*. In an examination of these focus structures in narrative texts, I find that there is no significant correlation between these types of focus structures and peak moments within the narrative. Furthermore, these focus structures seem to be used in discourse principally to express contrastive focus.

Turning to focus strategies observable at the discourse level, I identify an alternate strategy for highlighting the predicate, which is to employ the *só* “take” verb in a sequential SVC, the result being that the verb communicating the primary event appears at the end of the utterance rather than before a direct object constituent. This predicate focus strategy appears at peak moments in a narrative and does not express contrastive focus.

I also describe the truth value focus strategy which pairs the utterance-final marker *nε* with a preposed focused element that includes a locational reference. This strategy is used very

specifically to affirm the truth value of an utterance as it concludes a discourse unit.

Lastly, I look at the auxiliary verb *vá* “come”. I demonstrate that this morpheme can function as a development marker, signalling an event which is to be understood as integral to the overarching storyline of the narrative. This marker does not mark focus; it does not serve to mark a focus element within the utterance.

From these findings, I turn first to some conclusions regarding correlations between types of focus strategies and discourse-specific phenomena in Aja. First, it seems that focus strategies that are principally used in discourse to express contrastive focus -especially those that involve contrastive argument focus- are not generally going to be found at peak moments in discourse. This correlation may seem intuitively self-evident, but is worth noting nonetheless. A peak moment in discourse is not a time when an Aja speaker will generally be using the strategy that preposes a focus element and employs the marker *yí* in order to communicate contrastive focus. At non-peak moments, however, contrastive information can be very relevant to the discourse and contrastive focus structures are employed when appropriate. Examples of such contrastive information might be found in utterances that specify details of the setting, utterances that elucidate the relationships between narrative participants, or utterances that qualify the speaker's attitudes toward elements within the narrative.

Conversely, a strategy which is found principally at peak moments in narrative, such as the *só* predicate focus strategy described in this study, will not be a strategy that primarily expresses contrastive focus.

As Gbe languages tend to have similar constructions performing similar functions, further research could examine whether the structures described in this study are found to have corollary structures and functions in other Gbe languages.

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ⁱⁱIn the data used for this paper, only high phonetic tones are marked.

ⁱⁱⁱThe following abbreviations are used in glossing examples in this paper: ACC - accusative, COMP – complementizer, COMPL - completive, DEF - definite marker, DEV - development marker, DIM - diminutive, FOC - focus marker, HAB - habitual, INDF - indefinite, NEG - negation, NOM - nominalizing prefix, PL - plural, POSS - possessive, POT - potential, PROG - progressive, PRT - particle, REL –relativizer, REL.PRT - relative clause construction particle, SG - singular, STR - strong form, SUB –subordinating morpheme, TOP - topic. The unmarked form of the verb generally receives a default past interpretation if it is an active verb and a default present interpretation if it is a stative verb.

^{iv}In examples taken from other sources, glosses have been adapted to conform to the abbreviations used in this paper. Tone marking, however, is maintained as marked in the source.

^vThe only exception to this is in cases of verb focus where the 3SG clitic pronoun is coalesced with the verb, as noted in Fiedler (2012). Here, the 3SG clitic pronoun appears twice -coalesced with both the verb in the main clause and also with the preposed copy of the verb.

Reduction of noun classes and the emergence of semantic classification in Bafanji (grassfields, Cameroon)

Cameron Hamm, SIL Cameroon

1. Introductionⁱ

The aim of this paper is to document a shift in noun class agreement systems in Bafanji: reduction of concord in the noun class system is happening at the same time as the emergenceⁱⁱ of a new semantic agreement system.

Bafanji (ISO 639-3: bfj) is an Eastern Grassfields Bantu language spoken in the North West Region of Cameroon by a population of about 17,000 located primarily in the village of Bafanji, in Ngoketunjia Division (Lewis et. al. 2013).

This study is aided by a database of 578 nouns that consist of a single root each. It excludes borrowed words and obvious compound nouns. The database of nouns and associated morphological features are a subset of a lexicon under development by the author maintained in FieldWorks Language Explorer.

Within Eastern Grassfields (also called Mbam-Nkam), there are four branches consisting of North, Ngemba, Bamileke, and Nun (Watters 2003:226). Bafanji is one of at least ten Nun language varieties. Some of Bafanji's better known neighbours to the south and east are Bamun (also a Nun language), and the northern Bamileke languages Yemba (Dschang), and Ghomala'. Like its neighbours, Bafanji has a complex tone system which derives from the erosion of both the left and right edge of the word. The erosion of the left edge of the word has left very few noun class prefixes intact, and many times, a homorganic nasal which served as a noun class prefix has become reanalyzed to be part of the noun stem. Plural classes have fared better, with more

robust prefixes in almost all cases. Reduction of the noun class system in the Bamun language (Shupamem) has led one researcher to abandon noun classification based on target concord and rather analyse nouns in terms of their tonal or semantic properties (see Nchare 2005, 2012).

Concord in Bafanji is in a state of flux as it shifts from syntactic to semantic agreement. In the semantic concord system, noun modifiers agree with the head noun in terms of its animacy and number alone.

The noun class system in Bafanji shows reduction in range of application by the fact that only the possessive determiners display the traditional noun class system, and do not allow the semantic agreement system, as seen in most other noun modifiers. Noun class systems are commonly reduced in the eastern regions of Eastern Grassfieldsⁱⁱⁱ in comparison to Proto-Eastern Grassfields (PEG) (Watters 2003:242-3):

Proto-Eastern Grassfields:	10 classes
Ngemba:	8-10 classes
Western Bamileke:	8 classes
Eastern Bamileke:	5-7 classes
Nun:	4-7 classes ^{iv}
Mfumte (North):	none

The following is a closer look at how the noun class system works in Bafanji.

2. Noun class system

Bafanji has only six noun classes, whose scope is limited to the noun phrase (there is no agreement between verb and subject or object noun phrase). There are two noun modifiers that can agree with the noun class system: the possessive determiners and the attributive marker. This second modifier more commonly agrees according to the animacy and number of the head noun. While PEG has been reconstructed to have 10 classes, only six remain in Bafanji.

	Proto-Eastern Grassfields			Bafanji				
Bantu #	Class Prefix	Concord Segment	Concord Tone	Class Prefix	Concord Consonant	Concord Tone	1SG Poss. Det.	Attrib.
1 (sg)	Ñ-	u-	L	ø-, Ñ-, mû-	w-	L	wè	wè
2 (pl)	bə-	bə-	H	pà-, wù-, mbóò- ø-	p-	H	pégè	pě
3 (sg)	Ñ-	u-	H	ø-	w-	H	wê	wě
3a (sg)	ì-	u-	H					
5 (sg)	lì-	li-	H					
6 (pl)	mə-	mə-	H	mə-	m-	H	məŋè	mě
7 (sg)	à-	i-	H	ø-	j-	H	jê	jě
8 (pl)	bì-	bì-	H					
9 (sg)	Ñ-	i-	L	ø-, Ñ-	j-	L	jè	jè
10 (pl)	Ñ-	ì-	H					
19 (sg)	fə-	fə-	H					

Table 6.1: Comparison of Proto-Eastern Grassfields and Bafanji Noun class systems

Table 6.1 compares the PEG reconstructed noun class system with that of Bafanji. The first column contains the standard Bleek-Meinhof system of numbering noun classes which is the basis for the numbering of both Bafanji and PEG noun class systems (Katamba 2000:105). The next three columns present the details of the PEG system which are useful to display the reduction of noun classes that has taken place in Bafanji.

In the Bafanji section of the table, there are columns showing the various prefixes that can occur on nouns from each class, the concord consonant and tone, as well as the only two noun modifiers which agree in noun class with its antecedent (for the possessive determiner, other combinations of person and number also agree in the same manner, i.e. your, his, etc.). The

concord tone is realized on the first vowel of the possessive determiner root. The large number of noun prefixes in classes 1 and 2 suggest a more robust noun class system at some point in the past and that many noun class mergers have taken place (Watters 2003:242). Notice that the difference in concord between classes 1 and 3 is only in tone (class 1 with low tone and class 3 with high tone); the same applies for classes 7 and 9 (class 7 with high tone and class 9 with low tone).

The most common genders are 1/2, 7/6, 9/6. Less common genders are 1/6, 3/6. For more information on the noun class system, (see Hamm 2011).

2.1. Change in the agreement system

In Bafanji, reduction is seen as a change of tonal concord (as seen in example 1) and a change in consonant concord (as seen in example 2).

- | | | | | |
|------|-----------|---------|-----|--------------------------------|
| (1a) | ndégàè | j-è | wǎ | <i>'Whose house is this?'</i> |
| | House(9) | 9- attr | who | |
| (1b) | ndégàè | j-ě | wǎ | <i>'Whose house is this?'</i> |
| | House(9) | 7- attr | who | |
| (2a) | ŋkwǎ | w-ě | wǎ | <i>'Whose pestle is this?'</i> |
| | Pestle(3) | 3- attr | who | |
| (2b) | ŋkwǎ | j-ě | wǎ | <i>'Whose pestle is this?'</i> |
| | Pestle(3) | 7- attr | who | |

Examples 1a and b show that there are two acceptable ways of asking the question, "Whose house is this?" It can be said either with a low tone or a rising tone on the attributive marker (glossed ATTR). "House" *ndégàè* is a noun from class 9. The attributive marker in example (1a) is showing class 9 agreement, while example 1b shows class 7 agreement – the only difference being in tone, as we have said. Class 9 has low tone concord; class 7 has high tone concord^v. Examples 2a and b equally show two acceptable questions. 'Pestle' *ŋkwǎ* is in class 3. Here the difference between example (a) and (b) is that of a change in consonant concord: class 3 has *w* while class 7 has *j* as its concord consonant.

The older generation prefers the syntactic agreement while the younger generation prefers the semantic agreement.

The fact that these utterances are all grammatical shows a mismatch between noun and agreement target among singular nouns. Aikhenvald (2003:38) calls the regular mismatch ‘quirky’ agreement. She also gives examples from Australian languages which tend to regularize the agreement system according to the semantic agreement system, something that is also happening in Bafanji.

There can also be a mismatch between plural noun and agreement target.

- (3a) á wèi mǎ-yân p-è^{vi} lǐŋǐ~lǐŋǐ ‘He caught large thieves’
 3sg catch 6-thief 2-attr large
 (3b)* á wèi mǎ-yân m-è lǐŋǐ~lǐŋǐ (ungrammatical)
 3sg catch 6-thief 6-attr large

Example 3 shows the head noun “thieves” *mǎ-yân* is in class 6; however the attributive marker shows concord from class 2. We would expect a class 6 agreement with a class 6 noun. In this example however, it is ungrammatical to agree according to the traditional noun class system as you see in the starred utterance in 3b. The mismatch of noun class prefix and target agreement can be explained if it is seen as agreeing in animacy and number rather than noun class: the noun ‘thieves’ is a plural animate noun, thus it takes its agreement features from the plural animate concord: *p*. This fact gives evidence that there are two different agreement systems functioning in Bafanji noun classification. The inherited system is a formal system which has been eroded from PEG’s ten classes to a current six-class system, making it less stable than it once was. The emerging system is a semantic (re-)organization of nouns. Corbett^{vii} calls these systems of agreement syntactic and semantic, respectively (1991:225).

It is not surprising that the concord from class 2 is chosen as the marker of plural animacy – many other Bantoid languages attest gender 1/2 as a typically human gender. Two other Nun

languages employ *pa* as an optional plural particle: Bambalang (Wright 2009:13) and Bangolan (personal field work). In Bafanji, a large number of animals are also present in gender 1/2.

When we look at all eight agreement targets in Bafanji, it is clear that a change of agreement systems has begun. Table 6.2 displays which agreement system is employed by each agreement target. The plural classes are not included in this table since no reduction has happened where plural noun modifiers agree in the semantic system, class 2 becomes the animate class and class 6 becomes the inanimate class.

Modifier (agreement target)	Class 1 (w, L)	Class 3 (w, H)	Class 7 (j, H)	Class 9 (j, L)
Possessive determiner <i>my</i>	wə̀	wə̂	jə̂	jə̀
Attributive marker	wè	wě	jě	jè
Demonstrative (proximal)	wìrǐ	wìrǐ / jìrǐ	jìrǐ	jìrǐ
	animate (w)	inanimate (j)		
Indefinite Quantifier	wùtʃə́ú	jìtʃə́ú		
Numeral <i>one</i>	wímúʔú	jímúʔú		
Interrog. Deter. <i>Which?</i>	ɲqě	ɲě		
Definite Determiner	(w)â	(j)â		
Attributive marker	wè	jě		

Table 6.2: two agreement systems in singular classes

The first and second rows in the table show the noun modifiers (possessives and the attributive marker) that agree according to the inherited noun class system, as we have already discussed in section 2. However the attributive marker can also

agree according to animacy and so it is also shown at the bottom of the table as well. We observe four other targets which agree only according to animacy (and number). The fact that possessives (whether pronouns or determiners) conserve the inherited noun class system concurs with (Aikhenvald 2003:399,) ‘...agreement appears to be more stable on pronouns and demonstratives than on other targets’ Many other noun class analyses in Grassfields languages indicate that the noun class system is best displayed in the possessives (Mutaka 2005:378); Bantu E and G (notably Swahili) also show that possessives maintain noun class agreement while other agreement targets choose a semantic agreement (Corbett 1991:254). The table also highlights the fact that there are now more modifiers that agree in the semantic system, than the syntactic system (see also Aikhenvald 2003:409).

I want to pay particular attention to the third row—the set of proximal demonstratives. This is where Bafanji does not follow Aikhenvald’s generalization above, that is, demonstratives in Bafanji are not stable in comparison to possessives. Several things may be observed from the table: first, some class 3 nouns agree with the syntactic system and others agree with the semantic system; some nouns can agree with either system. In the table, this is shown by including both forms of the proximal demonstrative (*wiʔi* and *jiʔi*) that can be used with nouns from class 3.

A second observation that can be made from the table is that the tone is invariable throughout this noun modifier. There is a consistent tone melody that is found with the proximal demonstrative: Low-High. The possessives and the attributive marker continue to have unique tonal melodies to distinguish all the noun classes. The fact that demonstratives have an invariable tone melody obscures the two agreement systems that can be in effect with the demonstrative for a class 9 noun (the cell farthest on the right in the table). That is, since only high versus low tone distinguishes class 7 from class 9, and tone is invariable for this modifier, both concord systems yield the same result for a class 9 noun.

Thus we can posit that there is a loss of tonal concord in the demonstratives. But the concord consonant may be retained when nouns agree with the noun class system. This could be seen as an intermediate stage in the shift from a traditional noun class system to a system that agrees in terms of the semantic content of the head noun. The peculiar case of demonstratives will be considered in more detail in section 2.3.

Corbett discusses in detail the effects of two agreement systems (1991:225-260). His concept of ‘hybrid nouns’ makes the choice of agreement (syntactic or semantic) dependent in part on the target. In the languages he discusses, the majority of nouns follow one agreement system, while there are a few nouns whose agreement assignment is not straightforward. In the case of Bafanji, the two agreement systems affect the majority of nouns, and the target determines the agreement system used, as we have seen in Table 6.2. In effect, there seems to be a hybrid agreement system, and not just a few hybrid nouns.

2.2. Semantic agreement system

The semantic agreement system that is becoming the norm in Bafanji consists of four classes which make up two genders. It is worth noting that it seems the semantic agreement system includes tonal distinctions which remain from the syntactic agreement system. However, the fact is that three of the five agreement targets that agree semantically have lost tonal contrasts in a similar way that the tone on demonstratives is uniform across classes. The only agreement targets to conserve the tonal contrast across classes (that is, concord consists of a consonant and a tone) are the indefinite quantifier ‘a certain, some’, and the attributive marker. It could be that the tonal concord inherited from the syntactic system eventually will be lost completely.

	singular	plural
animate	w` (from class 1)	p´ (from class 2)
inanimate	j´ (from class 7)	m´ (from class 6)

Table 6.3: Semantic agreement system

The semantic noun class system has just two genders: animate and inanimate gender, as seen in Table 6.3. In the semantic system, every animate noun takes its singular and plural agreement from the animate gender. In the same way, every inanimate noun takes singular and plural agreement from the inanimate gender.

It has been observed in some Bantu E and G languages on the east coast of Africa that, ‘once semantic agreement has reached all agreement targets, then the nouns involved take a consistent [semantic] agreement pattern...’ regardless of their residual noun class affixes (Corbett 1991:254). Semantic agreement also seems to be the main classification of nouns in Kako (Bantu A.93) (Katamba 2000:108, cf. Ernst 1992:32-36), and has been seen in Mpiemo (Bantu A.86) (Thornell, Ankouma, Mabessimo, and Nkoumou, 2007, Thornell 2010)^{viii}. If one assumes that this is a natural pattern, it follows that in the future there will be a complete shift from syntactic to semantic agreement in the classification of nouns in Bafanji, with a loss of the syntactic agreement system. This seems to be the case in most of the nouns in Bangolan, a related language to Bafanji. Only a handful of nouns in this language persist from the former noun class system (personal field notes).

2.3. Stages of change in agreement systems

What is interesting in Bafanji is that it is possible to show the stages of change in the agreement system in the demonstratives. The theory of lexical diffusion states that phonetic changes may be abrupt, while lexical changes are gradual (Wang and Cheng 1977:150). Others have suggested that the lexical diffusion model is not generally agreed on (i.e. Bybee 2002). If it is agreed that the change in concord systems happens one lexical item at a time, and the majority of lexemes have shifted their agreement to the semantic system in most agreement targets, then an interesting fact emerges: change in agreement in Bafanji seems to be sensitive to specific agreement targets. The possessives have resisted this change so far, but most other modifiers have already made the change in agreement system. It is the demonstratives that show the most variation in concord.

Corbett (1991:226) presents an agreement hierarchy which shows an increase in the likelihood that an agreement target will choose semantic agreement over syntactic agreement.

	Least semantic	most semantic
Agreement Hierarchy:	attributive < predicate < relative pro. < personal pro.	

The agreement hierarchy states that the most likely agreement target to choose semantic agreement is the set of personal pronouns, followed by relative pronouns, predicates, and finally the least likely to select semantic agreement are the attributive markers of various sorts. Corbett does not define his term ‘attributive’, but it seems to be a catch-all term to include all agreement targets other than the categories he describes in his hierarchy (from the data he presents, attributives include demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers, etc.).The data from Bafanji fits into the predictions of the hierarchy, while sharpening distinctions within the attributive targets that it is the set of demonstratives that are at the point of switching to semantic agreement. It is also clear, at least in Grassfields and possibly in a wider area that possessives are the least likely targets to agree semantically (Mutaka 2005:378, Corbett 1991:254).

Corbett’s Hierarchy	Attributive markers	Predicates	Relative Pronouns	Personal Pronouns
Bafanji agreement	syntactic or semantic	no agreement	no agreement	semantic

Table 6.4: Bafanji in Corbett’s Agreement Hierarchy

The stages of change from syntactic to semantic agreement can be outlined as follows (shown below in Table 6.5). We start out with stage 1 as full agreement of the syntactic system. It is possible that the demonstratives were in this stage in generations past (as the possessives still are). Stage 2 shows the situation in which the demonstratives are currently found, which indicate a loss of tonal concord. At their most conservative in present-day Bafanji, the demonstratives only agree in

consonant with the full agreement system, having lost their tonal agreement at some point in the past. Stage 3 represents a re-alignment of concord consonant, so that individual lexemes change their concord consonant if the semantic concord consonant does not match the syntactic one. Consonant change could affect lexemes from any syntactic class, because there are always a few lexemes that do not fit semantic categorization. For example, there are some inanimate nouns in gender 1/2, and there are animate nouns in gender 3/6, 7/6, and 9/6.

Syntactic agreement	1	3	7	9	2	6
	singular classes				plural classes	
1. Full syntactic agreement	ẁ	ẃ	j́	j̀	ṕ	ḿ
2. Tone loss	w	w	j	j	p	m
3. Consonant change	w	j			p	m
Semantic agreement	animate	inanimate			animate	inanimate

Table 6.5: Stages of change in demonstratives (from syntactic to semantic agreement)

It should be noted that these stages of change are seen only in the demonstratives. Other agreement targets either agree syntactically or semantically. The exception to this is the attributive marker. It has been observed that the agreement system may fluctuate between syntactic or semantic agreement, with semantic agreement being more common.

A large number of lexemes are currently making a transition from stage 2 to stage 3 when choosing agreement with the demonstratives, and while this change is in process, we observe some disorder in the system. If the shift from stage 2 to 3 were complete, we would expect to see all inanimate nouns in classes 1 and 3 having changed their concord consonant from *w* to *j*. Animate nouns in classes 7 and 9 would likewise change from *j* to *w*. Similar switches would be expected to have occurred in the

plural classes. What we observe at this point in history is that almost half of all the nouns which are eligible to change their concord consonant have done so.

Some examples will help illustrate the change from stage 2 to stage 3. The following noun phrases include nouns that are from (syntactic) class 3; that is, when in a possessive phrase, the concord consonant is *w*. Both examples feature inanimate nouns.

- | | | | |
|------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (4a) | ŋgǣ | w-ìŋí | <i>'This gun'</i> |
| | gun(3) | 3-DEM(PROX) | |
| (4b) | fǝǝ | j-ìŋí | <i>'This river'</i> |
| | river(3) | INANIM.SG-DEM(PROX) | |

Example (4a) shows that the demonstrative takes syntactic agreement (*w* is the consonant concord for class 3), consistent with its noun class. The gloss shows this is syntactic class 3 agreement. This is a lexeme that is in the second stage of change because it retains its concord consonant from the syntactic agreement system. The lexeme “river” *fǝǝ* in example (4b), however, shows that it has moved into stage 3, since its consonant concord has changed to *j* to agree in animacy. It is an inanimate noun and changes its concord consonant from *w* to *j* so that it agrees with the semantic system. The gloss reflects this usage of the syntactic system and the concord consonant is labeled as inanimate singular agreement (INANIM.SG).

It is common that the more frequently used phrases (such as ‘this gun’) will be more resistant to change to semantic concord because of their frequency of use. Guns are not only frequently used in hunting, but also have a high cultural value, as part of the ceremonies related to funerals and death celebrations. It can be assumed that the less frequent phrases (this river), on the contrary, may easily adapt to change because of its infrequent use in everyday life.

The next two examples feature animate nouns from (syntactic) class 7, whose concord consonant is *j*.

- | | | | |
|------|---------|-------------|--------------------|
| (5a) | ǰû | j-ìŋí | <i>'This fish'</i> |
| | fish(7) | 7-DEM(PROX) | |

(5b) ɲgɔʔú w-ìʔí
 bird sp.(7) ANIM.SG-DEM(PROX) ‘This bird (sp)’

Example (5a) illustrates the class 7 lexeme “fish” *fû*, which takes syntactic agreement, since it is an animate noun, but does not take the animate concord. It has not changed concord consonant and thus is in stage 2. The next example, “bird” *ɲgɔʔú*, is also from class 7, but has changed its concord consonant to *w* to match the semantic agreement system (and as such, it is in stage 3). More examples from all classes that show unambiguous agreements are given in the Appendix – demonstratives showing syntactic and semantic agreement. Semantic agreement is rare in plural forms of the demonstrative. It shows that the change has started in singular classes, but has yet to reach the plural classes (see the Appendix – demonstratives showing syntactic and semantic agreement for data).

The stages of change seem like a simple pattern; however there are some exceptions, with data that do not fit this hypothesis. While nearly half of demonstratives feature semantic agreement, some modifiers’ concord consonants do not agree with either the semantic or the syntactic agreement systems. There are fifteen members (out of 42 total) of gender 1/6 whose concord consonant agrees with neither the noun class system, nor in animacy. Gender 1/6 is not very common and seems to be a hybrid gender, in that class 1 is historically reserved for humans which has now incorporated non-human animates, and class 6 is the most common plural for inanimate nouns. The reason for the existence of these nouns in this gender is unknown. This gender is, like all the others, based on the forms of the concord on the possessive determiners. Table 6.6 lists these exceptional words in possessive and demonstrative phrases. Possessive phrases give data to support the fact that they are in class 1, having *w* and a Low tone as its concord.

possessive	demonstrative gloss	
fón wə	fón jìʔí	my/this firefly
kún wə	kún jìʔí	my/this army ant
ntʃántʃéen wə	ntʃántʃéen jìʔí	my/this toad

nìŋ wə	nìŋ jìŋí	my/this animal
nnô wə	nnô jìŋí	my/this snake
ntìŋíntìŋí wə	ntìŋíntìŋí jìŋí	my/this dragonfly
nûŋkùúŋ wə	nûŋkùúŋ jìŋí	my/this green mamba
ndzũŋ wə	ndzũŋ jìŋí	my/this antelope species
ndzùó wə	ndzùó jìŋí	my/this Bohor reedbuck
ndzú ¹ ú wə	ndzú ¹ ú jìŋí	my/this cane rat(cutting grass)
ŋgùŋgěŋ wə	ŋgùŋgěŋ jìŋí	my/this caterpillar species
ŋgjěŋ wə	ŋgjěŋ jìŋí	my/this crocodile
ŋgjæ wə	ŋgjæ jìŋí	my/this bushbuck
ŋkáìŋfú wə	ŋkáìŋfú jìŋí	my/this Tantalus monkey
twéŋi wə	twéŋi jìŋí	my/this cobra

Table 6.6: Words from gender 1/6 that show opposite agreement of both concord systems

As we have seen, the concord consonant for class 1 nouns at both stage 2 and stage 3 is *w* (see Table 6.5), yet the attested consonant in the demonstrative is *j*. We can offer two suggestions that could explain the data: it is possible that these nouns are making a transition in noun class instead of agreement system – from class 1 to class 7. The only way to know the membership of a noun is from the possessives, and very few of these words occur in possessive constructions in natural speech, therefore they could easily be reanalysed as members of class 7, the most common class (and which includes a large number of inanimate nouns). The concord consonant would make sense if these nouns were in gender 7/6, which has *j* as its concord consonant – it is a much more robust gender with over half of all nouns surveyed in this gender^{ix}.

Another related explanation is that there is likely uncertainty among speakers as to the grammaticality of these phrases (noun + demonstrative); because the concord system is in flux: almost half of noun phrases with demonstratives agree according to animacy, and the other half have retained their less-than-full noun class agreement, speakers are not able to determine with certainty which of the concord consonants are grammatical. In any case, the current disorderly system of agreement in demonstratives will not likely persist for a very long time. With

the decline of the inherited noun class system, (going from overt, unique gender marking on the noun to covert gender marking, many nouns without any prefix in the singular), it is possible that the syntactic agreement system has become much more opaque. Since the function of noun classification is determination and head-modifier agreement, a simpler, semantically motivated system would be an easy choice to maintain adequate reference to the arguments for clearer communication, especially when the declining noun class system creates a simple and symmetrical system for hosting a semantic classification, as is the case in Bafanji, seen in Table 6.3.

3. Conclusion

The noun class system of Bafanji is an interesting case within Grassfields Bantu of a shift in agreement systems: the demonstratives reveal the change currently in process, moving from syntactic to semantic agreement. This change fits within Corbett's Agreement Hierarchy. Although agreement typically changes lexeme by lexeme, Bafanji seems to be sensitive to the agreement target, and as such has a large number of hybrid nouns.

This study has its weaknesses. It could use a better understanding of tone in the semantic agreement system. It is unclear whether the tonal concord is present in all targets, or if in fact, many modifiers agree only in concord consonant and that the semantic agreement system is losing all tonal characteristics. It is also unclear if the grammatical tonal agreement replaces or interacts with the lexical tone of these noun modifiers. Also, not enough sociolinguistic data has been presented to support the claim that this is language change and not variation. Further empirical data specifically in the demonstratives could give evidence to the claim that there is an age split between syntactic and semantic agreement.

Appendix – demonstratives showing syntactic and semantic agreement

The following examples show unambiguous cases of either syntactic or semantic agreement. The first row shows an inanimate noun from class 1 because it retains the *w* concord consonant, it unambiguously illustrates syntactic agreement (agreeing with the noun class of the head noun and not animacy). The second row, however illustrates semantic agreement, with an inanimate noun changing its consonant concord to *j*.

Example		Gloss	class, animacy, agreement
mú-lǝǝ 1-grass sp.	w-ìǝí 1-DEM(PROX)	this grass species	Cl1, In. Syn.
mú- ^h nwí 1-knife	j-ìǝí ^x INANIM.SG-DEM (PROX)	this knife	Cl1, In. Sem.
ŋgǎe gun(3)	w-ìǝí 3-DEM(PROX)	this gun	Cl3, In. Syn
fǝǝ river(3)	j-ìǝí INANIM.SG-DEM(PROX)	this river	Cl3, In. Sem
ǝǝ fish(7)	j-ìǝí 7-DEM(PROX)	this fish	Cl7, In. Syn.
ŋgǝǝú bird sp.(7)	w-ìǝí ANIM.SG-DEM (PROX)	this bird sp.	Cl7, In. Sem
nǝǎe buffalo(9)	j-ìǝí 9-DEM(PROX)	this buffalo	Cl9, In. Syn.
fù blind.person(9)	w-ìǝí ANIM.SG-DEM (PROX)	this blind person	Cl9, In. Sem
mè-ndò ^u 6-pangolin	m-ìǝí 6-DEM(PROX)	these pangolins	Cl6, In. Syn.
<i>(no examples found)^{xi}</i>			Cl6, In. Sem

pà-mə̀ ^ɬ kèé	p-ìíí	these	Cl2, In. Syn.
2-morning	2-DEM(PROX)	mornings	
(no examples found)			Cl2, In. Sem

Note: Cl1, In. Syn. = class 1, inanimate, syntactic
 Cl1, In. Sem. = class 1, inanimate, semantic
 Cl3, In. Syn. = class 3, inanimate, syntactic
 Etc.

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ⁱⁱSome could see this as a re-emergence of a semantic system, but on a much smaller scale. Denny and Creider (1986) document the semantic basis of noun classes in proto-Bantu, to which Grassfields languages are related

ⁱⁱⁱData sources: *Proto-Eastern Grassfields*: Hyman 1980:182; *Ngemba*: Leroy 1980; *Western Bamileke*: Anderson 1980, Harro and Haynes 1991; *Eastern Bamileke*: Satre 1997, Hyman 1970, Nissim 1980; *Nun*: Hamm 2011, DeVisser 2011, Wright 2009, Nashipu 2016; *Mfumte*: Eyoh (personal communication).

^{iv}The Bangolan noun class system has mostly collapsed, with only a handful of nouns retaining a vestigial four class system (personal fieldwork).

^vThe attributive marker shown here has its own lexical (Low) tone. The agreement concord tone from class 7 (High) combines with the lexical Low tone to produce a rising tone. It is unclear by what process the concord tone follows the lexical tone, given that the concord consonant precedes the root of the attributive marker.

^{vi}Instead of the expected LH tone (see Table 6.1) here and in example 3b, a L tone is observed. The reason for this has not been investigated. It could be a case of tone simplification – reducing the LH contour into L when preceding the H of the following word.

^{vii}Thanks to Mark Dingemanse for bringing Corbett's work to my attention.

^{viii}I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer who has brought Mpiemo to my attention.

^{ix}230 nouns were found to be in gender 7/6, out of a total of 476 count nouns studied (Hamm 2011:13).

^x This lexeme can assign agreement from either syntactic or semantic systems (i.e. it can have *w* or *j* concord consonant).

^{xi} However see example (3a) in section 0, for semantic agreement with a different noun modifier.

Torona: a disappearing Talodi language of Sudan

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to document the Torona [tqr] language before it disappears through a word list, some phrases, and a text from a last speaker, and to highlight the methodological challenges in documenting this language. The paper outlines the historical factors that have made the language nearly extinct, reports the discovery of a last speaker despite the language having been previously reported extinct (Grimes 1996:403), verifies the status of Torona as a distinct language, and makes brief analytical observations of the data in order to identify typologically interesting features of this disappearing language.

This documentation of the Torona language has been undertaken as part of an on-going comparative study we are conducting on the Talodi family that Torona belongs to. The Talodi languages are Niger-Congo languages and have noun class systems typical of that family (Greenberg 1963). They are spoken in a series of small communities all within 120 kilometres of each other in the south-east Nuba Mountains of Sudan, and were first distinguished as a family in the seminal survey of the Nuba Mountains by MacDiarmid and MacDiarmid (1931). Torona is listed as one of four settlements situated in the “Moro Hills” (MacDiarmid and MacDiarmid 1931:161), to the north of Talodi town, now the Saraf Al-Jamous district.

The existing comparative-historical analysis of the Talodi family by (Schadeberg 1981) distinguishes five languages, but Torona is one of several further communities that are known to be clustered with these whose status as dialect or independent language group remains to be settled (Stevenson 1956:101-102, Schadeberg 1989:70). Some of these communities now have

some basic literature in their languages, but Torona does not, and the Torona community has now dispersed from its last village.

Talodi Variety	ISO 693-3	Locality	Comparative Study	Vernacular Literature
Nding	eli	Eliri	Schadeberg 1981	
Tasomi-Tata	tlo	Talodi	Schadeberg 1981	
Dagik	dec	Buram hill chain	Schadeberg 1981	1996-2014
Darra	jle			1984
Daloka-Aheimar			Schadeberg 1981	
Lumun	lmd	Saraf Al Jamous		1995-2014
Acheron	acz			1994-2014
Tocho	taz		Schadeberg 1981	1996-2014
Torona	tqr			

Table 7.1: Talodi varieties

Of these nine varieties, we obtained Swadesh data for four, Lumun, Acheron, Tocho, Dagik, from mother-tongue writers at a grammar discovery workshop held in Khartoum in April 2012. Transcribed Swadesh data for another four, Nding, Tasomi, Daloka, and Darra is available from (Schadeberg 1981) and (Crocker1984). Torona data, however, cannot be obtained by either of these routes, because there are no writers of the language and because only a small amount of data is available from other linguists (40 words collected by MacDiarmid and MacDiarmid which are preserved in an unpublished comparative wordlist of Roland Stevenson). Nor is there any longer a Torona community that can be visited in order to obtain

more data, because Torona village is now uninhabited. Of all the Talodi varieties, Torona's particular situation sets up a particular methodological challenge: can a last speaker be found?

2. The extinction process

First, it is necessary to understand the process that Torona has been going through. Torona was one of four small communities of the Talodi family, Lumun, Torona, Tocho, Acheron in what (MacDiarmid and MacDiarmid 1931:161) called the 'Moro Hills' but which is now the Saraf Al-Jamous district. The Lumun, Tocho, and Acheron communities are still there, and a Tira [tic] community who identify with Lumun identity and culture. Immediately to the west of these groups is the larger Moro [mor] language group. But sometime after Torona was first documented by (MacDiarmid and MacDiarmid 1931), the rural Torona community ceased to exist. Today there are only tombs and ruined houses. In the multilingual setting of Saraf Al-Jamous, the decline of Torona was precipitated by four factors.

2.1. War

Oral tradition in the Tira-speaking community, which the second author comes from, says that in the past there was war between Torona and the Lumun and Tira communities. There is a tomb at Kuruthine said to contain war dead of Torona from this conflict. The practice for abductees from war was that they became members of the abductor tribe, so any Torona abductees shifted to the Lumun or Tira language of their new community. In declining numbers and perhaps seeking security from inter-group conflict, Torona people abandoned their historic villages in the hills at Tandaruno, Tukki, Tomiat (these are now a bamboo forest) and Cumorre (now inhabited by Lumun people) and lived only in the Torono village down on the plain, near Kindirma.

2.2. Famine

Famine occurred in the area in the second half of the 20th century, and the remaining people dispersed from Torono village. A Tira elder tells the story that in the famine; people of Torono exchanged their children for sorghum, although it has not been possible to trace people whom this happened to. But some of the last Torona individuals re-settled safely in Kindirma (Tira-speaking), Tasomi (Tasomi-Tata-speaking), Kologi (to the east), and Khartoum where their language could no longer be used with others and any children would have grown up speaking the new languages of those communities.ⁱ

2.3. Inter-marriage

Some Torona individuals joined the surrounding Tira-speaking community through peaceful intermarriage. Then children of these marriages grew up speaking the Tira language. Likewise, some intermarried with Lumun and their children grew up speaking Lumun.

2.4. Trade

Torona people are known among the other groups in the area for manufacturing good quality decorated clay pots, boards, plates. This helped individuals to retain pride in the Torona name, but economic opportunity encouraged Torona sellers to use Tira, the language of a larger surrounding population of potential buyers.

Thus, the Torona language has declined through the effects of war, famine, intermarriage, and trade, which has led to the end of Torona as a distinct community and to language shift to other nearby languages. The most common shift is to the Tira language (Grimes 1996:403), since Torona people had the most contact with the surrounding Tira-speaking community. Today, there are isolated individuals who identify themselves ethnically as Torona within the Tira, Lumun, and Tasomi communities (including Tira and Lumun urban diaspora communities in Khartoum and other towns.)

But when individuals who identify themselves as Torona are asked about the Torona language, they all refer to one woman.

3. The speaker

Karaḡul Alunga Almendi is a woman in her 80s. She learned the Torona language as a child, then got married to a Tira-speaking man. They began living in Torono village but abandoned it because of poor crop yields, and came to Khartoum where she has lived for over 40 years. She now speaks Tira regularly, but speaks almost no Arabic despite having lived in Khartoum for several decades.

In past years, she was one of five Torona speakers within the Tira community in Khartoum. But the other four have each died, and she has no-one left to speak the language with. Some Torona individuals of grandparent age within the Tira community know some Torona words and have some comprehension ability, but Karaḡul states that they do not speak Torona with full proficiency. Thus, she may be the last proficient speaker of Torona [tqr], and her great-grandparent generation the last proficient generation. Certainly, she is the last proficient speaker in either the Tira or Lumun communities, but we are less informed about the Tasomi-Tata community. In 2003, a Tasomi-Tata speaker from Tasomi village reported to the second author that people in one household there knew the Torona language. Unfortunately, it is not possible to verify whether or not any proficient speakers are still there, because the area has been inaccessible due to war since June 2011.

The second author of this paper (Alaki) is from the Tira-speaking community, which enabled him to make a number of enquiries before eventually locating Karaḡul, and then to obtain Torona data from her which had to be done through Tira [tic] as the bridging language since she speaks only Torona [tqr] and Tira [tic]. Karaḡul provided Torona data at her home in Mayo, Khartoum in June 2012. She provided 187 words from a Swadesh list, plus some phrases and clauses, and a dancing text. She worked hard, showing determination to remember the language which she no longer uses with anyone. She has pride in

the Torona language as a thing of value put in her life by God. She gives permission to share the data with those interested in the Torona language.

Karařul Alunga Almendi died in January 2014 while this paper was being prepared.

4. The status of Torona as a language

Comparison of the Torona word list data with other Talodi varieties shows that within the Talodi family, Torona [tqr] clusters with Lumun [lmd]. Alveolar stops /t, n/ occur word-finally in Torona, a property shared only by Lumun, as seen in the following roots:

Gloss	Torona	Lumun	Tocho	Acheron	Dagik
eye	cɪt	cit	cik	zík	sɪɣɪ
heart	cigit	cigit	cægik	zægik	sigi
tooth	cɪnit	cɪnit	cəɲik	zəɲik	səɲi
light	-ɪpapat	-ɪpapat	obuppuk	appak	ɔbɔpɔ
arms	ɲaʊn	ɲayʊn	ɲəɣʊɲ	ɲəɣʊɲ	ɲʊwɪ
egg	cɛn	cɪn	cɪŋ	zɪŋ	suwɪ

Gloss	Darra	Daloka	Talodi	Eliri
eye	ðəki	sigi	ɟik	cik
heart	ðəki	daga	ɟi	cigi
tooth	ðəɲɲi	sinni	ɟɪɲi	cɛɲi
light	obuppu	-abuppu	-ɔppɔ	(ɔllɔ)
arms	ɲuwi	ɲwi	lamanɟ	amanɟ
egg	ði	si	ɟɪŋ	cujɲ

Further inspection of word list items for phonetic similarity reveals that the following Torona roots are shared only by Lumun, including suppletive forms for “leg/legs”:

Gloss	Torona	Lumun	Tocho	Acheron
three	-ɛɾabʊllʊk	-aɾaβʊllʊk	-əɽɽək	-əɽɽək
four	-ɔɟɔɾɪn	-ɔɟɔɾɪn	prandɔ	bɾandɔ
leg	wək	wək	cəɣək	zəɣək
legs	taɟək	taɟək	(ɲ-)	(ɲ-)

clothing	keɾɛk	kəɾɛt	kaɖɪja	gaɖɪja
salt	ŋʊʂʊl	ŋʊʂʊɬʊ	cəra	zəla
hoe	kirek	kɪɾɛk	aʂəkaba	zəmeɣɛ
sit	ɪkkɔ	ɪkkɔ	ɔɾəŋɔ	ɔnəŋɔk
take	ɔnɛɣɛ	ɔðɔnɛɣɔ	ɔmmɔ	ɔmmɔ
walk	ɔɲarɔ	ɔɲarɔ	ɔɲappəɾɔ	zəppɪjɔ
good	-ɔbɪɾɔt	-ɔβɔɾɔt	-ɔɾɪŋ	-ɔɾɪŋ
cold	-ɪɾʊk	-ɪɾʊk	-ɪttɪŋ	-ɪttɪŋ
rotten	-ɔkʊnagɔ	-ɔkʊnagɔt	-ɔɾuwək	-urək
new	-ɔɪɾɛ	-ɪɛ	-aʂɛ	-azɛ

Gloss	Dagik	Darra	Daloka	Talodi	Eliri
three	-əttək	-əttək	-ittək	-ɪɖək	-attək
four	pɾando	bəɾanto	awuɾando		-ibbɪɲɪk
leg	səgək	ŋəkə	ŋgə	sagak	cigak
legs	(ŋ-)	(ŋ-)	(ŋ-)	(ŋ-)	(ŋ-)
clothing	kaɖɪja	kada	kaɖa	deɖa	taɖɪja
salt	ləmpɪɛ	dəŋattan	təŋaɖalə	ʂala	cala
hoe	ŋəɖɪ	-ke	-gucca		ɛmʊɾuɖɛ
sit	nəŋa	kudde	ʊɖɔ	dɔŋʊ	tiŋɡʊ
take	nəmɔ	mo	lumu	ʊmmʊ	amwa
walk	suppɔ	ðubbo	kɔɣɔ	ŋɣɔ	ŋɣɔ
good	-ɔɾɪ	yotti	-ɔtti	-ɔɾɾɛ	-attɪŋ
cold	-ɪti		-ɪtti	-ɪttɪŋ	-ɪttɪŋ
rotten	-ɔɾuwɔ		-uyulanno	-ɖɔɾa	-ɲɔɾɔta
new	-asɛ	yaye	-aɛ	-asse	-aʂɛ

Although Torona clusters with the Lumun language, we do not say that Torona is a dialect of Lumun. The following Swadesh word list data shows 68% (122/180) lexical similarity with

Lumun, which is low enough to consider Torona to be a separate language.

A few items are identical; while other items judged to be cognate show elided sound(s) that differ in one or more phonetic features, or different word-initial consonants or word-final vowels or extensions. There are recurring differences *ɿ:r*, *C:kw* (between vowels), *ŋ:n*, *k:t*, *k:l* (word-finally).

Lumun items judged cognate with Torona items are marked ɿ)

Gloss	Torona	Lumun	Gloss	Torona	Lumun
all	appɿɿðɿŋ	appɿk ^C	mouth	ɿŋ	ɿŋn ^C
arm	kaʊn	ʊɿʊn ^C	nail	ɛɛɛɛ	ŋʊpa
ashes	kəɿɿk	muɿjuk	name	ɿɿkɔ	kəɿan
back	cəkɿɿk	kuɿjul	narrow	pəmməŋ	pɔɿɿagɔðɛ
bad	p-ɔɿɿðak	l-ɔɿɿðak ^C	near	ɛnnɛ	apɿttɿt
bark	kapɿɿɿ	təmak	neck	cəŋɿɛt	cəllək ^C
belly	caɿɿək	carak ^C	new	p-ɔɿɿɛ	k-ɿɛ ^C
big	pɿttɿk	pɿttɿk ^C	night	ŋɿɿɿɿa	ŋɿɿɿɿa ^C
bird	pɿɿɛ	pɿɿɿɿɛ ^C	nose	kɿɿɛ	kɿɿɿɛ ^C
bite	mb-ɔɿɿɿɿ-t	ɔɿɿɿɿ ^C	old	ɿɿɿkka	kɿɿɛ
			ɿnew		
black	pɿɿɿ	pɿɿɿ ^C	old	ɿɿmɿɿɿ	ɿɿɿ- ðɿmɿɿɿ ^C
			ɿyoung		
blood	ŋɿccək	ŋɿccək ^C	one	pullukkɿ	pullukkɿ ^C
blow	aɿɿɿk	ɿkkɿwɿ ^C	person	pɿɿɿ	pɿɿ ^C
bone	cəmməŋ	cəmmɿan ^C	play	ɿkkɔ	apɿða
branch	aɿɿɿɛ wɿɿɛ	kuɿɿ	pull	cɿɿɿ	ɔðɔ
breast	kəmək	cɿmmɿk ^C	push	ɔðɛɛkɿ	ɔðɿɿ
brother	ɔɿa	ɔɿaŋ ^C	rain	kaɿɿk	kaɿɿk ^C
child	ʊɿɿk	ʊɿɿɿ ^C	red	pɿɿɛ	pɿɿɛ ^C
clean	ɿ-pɿɿa	pɿɿɛ ^C	road	kaðɿk	kaðar ^C
clothing	kɛɿɿk	kəɛɿ ^C	root	ɿaga	ɿaga ^C
cloud	kɿɿɿ	ɿɿɿɛ	rope	ɿɿɿk	ɿɿɿak ^C
cold	ɿɿk	p-ɿɿk ^C	rotten	w-ɿkɿnagɿ	p- ɿkɿnagɿ-t ^C

come	arɛk	arɪk ^C	rough	irɪŋgi	pɔrɛrɛ
cook	pɪða	ʔanɔ	round	cɔrɔt	ɔramɪrʔagɔ
cut	ɔmɔðɪ	ɔɡɪɔ	rub	əŋɡɔɣɪ	ʔ-ɔɡɪtɔ ^C
dance	ʊkkɔ	ʔ-ʊkkwɔ ^C	salt	ŋɔʃɔl	ŋɔʃɔlɔʔɪ ^C
die	p-ɪŋɔ-t	ʔ-ɪɔ ^C	sand	nunɖu nɔrɛ	tamɔr
dig	ɪbɔ-ðɛ	ɪʔɔ-t ^C	say	anɛrɛ	ʔ-ɪrɛ ^C
dirty	pɪŋɪ	pɔɲɪ ^C	scratch	ŋanɛ	ʔ-ɔɡwɛ
dog	ʔuk	ʔuk ^C	see	ɔrɛ	ʔ-ɪma
drink	ɪkɪ	ɪkɔ ^C	sew	mɪjɛk	ʔ-ɛtɛt
dry	pɔŋɖɔmat	pɔŋɖan ^C	sharp	arɪkkɔt	pɔrɛ
dust	kɔrɔʃan	tɔrɔʃan ^C	shoot	ɔlɪ	ʔ-ɔrɔ ^C
ear	kɔnu	kɔnu ^C	short	ɪ-ʔutɔk	pɔ-ʔutɔt ^C
earth	nunɖu	caʃɔ	sing	ɛja	ʔ-ɔŋwɔ
eat	ɔrɔɡɪ	ʔ-ɔrɔɡɔ ^C	sit	ɪkkɔ	ʔ-ɪkkɔ ^C
egg	cɛn	cɪn ^C	skin	karɔk	kɔrat ^C
eye	cɪt	cɪt ^C	sky	ʔɪrɔk	ʔɪrɔt ^C
fall	ɔʔɔ-t	aʔɔ ^C	sleep	ɔɲɪ ɪɖɛ	ʔ-ɔtɛt ɪɖɛ ^C
far	ka-cɪʔan	cɪʔtan ^C	small	pɔtte	pɔtte ^C
fat	ŋak	ŋak ^C	smell	p-ɔkɔnagɔ	ʔ-akɔnagɔ ^C
father	ɔtɛ	ɔʔapa	smoke	kɔʃan	kɔʃɔk
fear	ʔ-ʊrɛ	ʔ-ɔðɪɔ	smooth	ɪ-ŋɛra	pɔ-ŋara ^C
feather	kətti	kɔrɔcɔ	snake	pɪnɪk	pɪɲɪl ^C
fight	ʔ-ɔʔɔrɔ	ʔ-ɔðattɔ ^C	spear	kaðɔk	kaðɔk ^C
finger	caɣət	caun	spit	ŋanɛ	ʔ-ɔtɔɡɔ
fire	ʔɪk	ʔɪk ^C	split	əmɔtɔ tɪt	ʔ-ɪlagɔrɪt
fish	kaʃɛ	paʃɛ ^C	squeeze	pɔʃɔrot	ʔ-ʊrɔɡɔ
flow	ŋ-ɔnda-ðɛ	ɔrɔ ^C	stab	ɔŋɔ	ʔɛ
fly	p-ɪrɛ-t	ɪrɔ ^C	stand	ɔʔɪrɔk	ɔʔɪrɔ ^C
fog	kɔɲɪ	pɔrɔʃɛ	star	cəðɔk	cəðɔt ^C
food	ŋɔrɔ	ʔɪrɪt ^C	stick	kɔran	pɔa
foot	taʃɔk	tamaðɛ	straight	p-ajɔrɔ-ðɛ	ɔʔɪrɔ-t cɪk ^C
four	ŋ-ɔʔɪrɪn	m-ɔʔɪrɪn ^C	suck	wagɔ	agɔ ^C
full	ɔpaðɛ	p-ɔpaðɛ ^C	sun	cɪŋgi	cɪŋgi ^C

give	ɾ-təð-m	təðet ^C	swell	p-əðega-ðe	t-ɔ̌tuga-t cɪk ^C
good	əbɪrət	l-əbərət ^C	tail	kuðik	kuðɪk ^C
grass	tʊɾʊk	taɟə	take	ɔneye	əðənekɔ ^C
green	cʊe	pɪccɪ	ten	attul	attul ^C
guts	tukkuk	tukuk ^C	thing	aβe	paβu ^C
hair	kwaŋ	kwan ^C	think	ɲakkak	t- əgwarɪgət
hand	ʊkʊn	katal	three	ŋ-eɾaβullʊk	m- aɾaβurʊk ^C
head	ca	ca ^C	throw	tʰɪllɪkɪna	ɔɾe
hear	cɪɟə-ðe	ɔcɪkɔ-t ^C	tie	ɪlɪɟɪ	ɪɾɪɟɔ ^C
heart	cɪɟɪt	cɪɟɪt ^C	tongue	tʰɪŋe	tʰɪɾe ^C
heavy	pɪmməŋ	pɪmmɪn ^C	tooth	cɪɲɪt	cɪɲɪt ^C
hit	kɪɾɪɲ	ɔkwɔ	tree	pɪɾa	pɪɾa ^C
hoe	kɪɾek	kɪɾek ^C	turn	əβərɪtagɔ	əβərɪtɔ ^C
hole	cɪβʊ	kʊɾɔɭ	two	m-eɾa	m-eɾa ^C
hunt	aɲe	kamel	vomit	ʊte	t-ʊtte ^C
husband	ɔŋɟe	pəɾe	walk	ɔɲarɔ	t-ɔɲarɔ ^C
kill	ɔpɔ-ðe	t-ɔkwɔ-t ^C	warm	ɪppa	p-ɪpa ^C
knee	kəŋɟɔ	kʊŋɟʊ ^C	wash	əbakɔ	t-ɪme
knife	kɪɾɪjaŋ	kɪɾɪttaŋ ^C	water	ŋɪk	ŋɪɾɪ ^C
know	p-əna	t-ɪna ^C	wet	əɟɪt	pɪan
laugh	ɔcɪɾɔ	ɔɟɪɾɔ ^C	what?	ɟɪ	ŋɪŋ-ta
leaf	kaɾa	taða ^C	when?	paɔn	aɟɪŋ-ta ^C
leg, legs	wək, taɟɔk	wək, taɟɔk ^C	where?	ɟɾe	kər-ta ^C
lie (down)	ɪje ɲɪk	ɪɟat cɪk ^C	white	pɪpʊk	pɪβʊk ^C
light ~heavy	ɪpapat	p-ɪpapat ^C	who?	wɔɾe	ɔtta ^C
live (at)	ŋɟa ɲɪk	ɔga	wife	paɾɪ	paɾɪ ^C
live (alive)	paɲɪk	əðurɔɟɪt	wind	kʊɾʊβaŋ	kanəŋ
long	ɪccɛ~rucek	p-ugwɪt ^C	wipe	kʊwɪɾa	t-ɔkwɛ ^C

louse	arere	kairi ^c	woman	puɾu pɔβari	pul i- βɔβari ^c
man	puɾu pɔjɔra	pul i- βɔjɔra ^c	woods	kɔ-bira	i-γira ^c
many	kɔppɔt	pittik	word	kuɾi	lon
meat	kəβa	aβa ^c	work	ɔkɔ-ðe	ɔregɔ
moon	kwanɔk	kwanɔk ^c	worm	teŋek	lu
mother	ɔnna	ɔraia	wrong	kɔgɪðak	lamɔlɔgɔ
mountain	cəðɔk	cɔɾɔŋ	year	tuβut	tuβut ^c

To supplement the lexical evidence that Torona [tqr] is a separate language, we can also note that Torona and Lumun have distinct ethno linguistic identities in the area. Speakers of Lumun [lmd] are called /a-ru/ and Torona [tqr] people /a-ɾɔnɔ/, and neither term can be used for the other. We can trace the divergence of Lumun and Torona identities as follows. Traditionally, Lumun speakers identified with a sacred stone known as *Mu*. Karaḡul reports that Torona people identified with the *Mu* sacred stone in the past, and the Lumun cultural identity based on this sacred stone is also shared by Tira [tic] speakers in the area even though Tira is not of the same language family.

The name *Lumun* itself contains the root /mu/ with a Tira noun class marker /l-/ for denoting people groups. But while the Lumun cultural identity was extended to the Tira-speaking community that settled in the area, the Torona community in contrast became more estranged from the common Lumun culture through war and through settling below the hills away from Lumun speakers, although intermarriage remained possible. In place of Lumun culture, Torona shows an alternate cultural influence from Tocho, for example in the term used for God, /tɪɾɔk/ “sky, God” corresponding to Tocho [taz] /tɪɾɔk/ “sky, God”, whereas Lumun [lmd] uses /kaβɪk/ “rain, God”. Tocho cultural influence on Torona can also be seen in the dancing text given below (section 7), which exhorts dancing in a Tocho style.

Hence, on lexical and ethno linguistic grounds, Torona [tqr] can be considered a separate language from its nearest relative Lumun [lmd]. In recent years, the Torona [tqr] language has

fitted the profile of a *nearly extinct* language since it has only isolated speakers of grandparent or great-grandparent generation with limited opportunities to use the language (Lewis and Simons 2010). With the passing of Karaḥul, it may be extinct, depending on whether or not any other speakers elsewhere are still living. In contrast, the Lumun [lmd] language continues to be spoken daily in the hill villages where its people live (Smits 2007:1).

In the remaining sections of this paper, we briefly examine some features of the phonology, grammar, and a text of the Torona language.

5. Phonology notes

The vowel and consonant charts for transcription of Torona are very similar to other Talodi language varieties (Schadeberg 1981, Smits 2007, Alaki and Norton 2013) and similarities will be noted as we go along. Redundancies are observed which render certain sounds as allophones, shown in parentheses.

Vowels	front	central	back
high +ATR	i		u
high –ATR	ɪ		ʊ
mid +ATR	(e)		(o)
mid –ATR	ɛ	ə	ɔ
low		a	

As in other Talodi languages (Norton 2013, Alaki and Norton 2013), there are two central vowels, and ATR is distinguished in high vowels. Non-high +ATR vowels [e, o] are only recorded when there is a high +ATR vowel in the same word, so they can be attributed to vowel harmony.

puṛe	‘bird’
kirek	‘hoe’
poṭurot	‘squeeze’

The other vowel qualities are not redundant as exemplified in the following words:

heart	cigit			guts	tukkuk
tooth	cipit			earth	nun̄du
snake	pɪnɪk	leaf	kaɽa	year	tuβuɽ
dirty	pɪɲɪ	roots	ɽaga	person	puɽu
clothing	kɛɽɛk	breast	kəmək	star	cɔðɔk
worm	tɛɲɛk	sheep	ɽəɲgək	rope	ɽuɽɔk

As in other Talodi languages (Schadeberg 1981), five places of articulation are recorded for consonants:

Consonants	labial	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar
plosives	p (b) (β)	t̪ (d̪) (ð̪)	t (d) (r)	c (ɟ) (j)	k (g) (ɣ)
nasals	m	(ɲ)	n	ɲ	ŋ
trill			r		
flap			ɽ		
lateral			l		
approximants				(j)	w

Word-initial plosives are voiceless, but they variably become voiced utterance-medially and variably become voiced fricatives between vowels word-medially except at alveolar place of articulation, where the tap [ɽ] is suspected to be the intervocalic variant of /t/. The cluster [kw] as in [kwanɔk] ‘moon’ can be interpreted as a labialised velar plosive /kʷ/.

Geminate plosives also occur which are always voiceless stops. We suspect that short voiceless plosives between vowels in the transcription are ambivalent between shorter realisations of geminates, or non-geminates that failed to become voiced.

Sonorants are also sometimes recorded long, [pɔmma] “(I) don’t know”, [ɔnnan] “mother”.

Concerning nasals, as in most other Talodi languages (Schadeberg 1981) nasal phonemes occur at only four places of articulation, since the dental nasal occurs only in the conditioned environment of a following dental plosive.

Labial	mijek	‘sew’	mbɪpɔðɛ	‘I found it’
Dental	-	-	ɲɖa ɲɪk	‘live at’
Alveolar	nunɖu	‘earth’	ndan	‘here’
Palatal	ɲakkak	‘think’	-	-
Velar	ŋɪk	‘water’	ŋgɔra	‘night’

As shown above, homorganic nasal-plosive clusters are found in Torona for all places of articulation except palatal, but all occurring nasal-plosive clusters are found word-initially, therefore they can be interpreted as prenasalized plosives. Furthermore, in Torona there is a process of prenasalization in which a nasal is inserted at the beginning of a dependent word after a head word.

kuttu ŋ-guwa	‘put (your hands) low’ (verb-adverb)
kwaŋ ŋ-g-aŋ	‘your (sg) hair’ (noun-possessor)
pɔmma ŋk-wira	‘(I) don’t know (the) trees’ (verb-object)

Concerning liquids, as in other Talodi languages (Schadeberg 1981) four liquid sounds are recorded, tap, trill, flap, lateral:

barɪ	‘wife’
ɔcɪɔ	‘laugh’
pira	‘tree’
kurɪ	‘word’
caɾək	‘stomach’
puɾe	‘bird’

ɔɭɪ	‘run’
ɪɭɪɣɪ	‘tie’

The tap [ɾ] is suspected to be an allophone of /t/ but is also difficult to distinguish from a short realisation of a trill [r]. The flap [ɾ] has a postalveolar articulation in which the tongue is brought back behind the alveolar ridge before striking the back of the ridge as it passes. Following convention, the retroflex flap symbol [ɻ] is adapted for transcription of the similar action of the postalveolar flap (Stevenson 1956:76, Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996:216)

In Torona, the flap occurs word-initially, unlike all other Talodi varieties except Darra (Crocker 1984):

ɾʊk	‘dogs’
ɾɪɟk	‘goats’
ɾəŋgək	‘sheep’
ɾaga	‘roots’

Flaps make a brief closure as the tongue passes the alveolar ridge (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996:231) which canonically is done between two vowels. The less typical word-initial flap of Torona has a short transitional vocoid as the tongue is moving towards the alveolar ridge, e.g. [ʔɾʊk]. Since the flap occurs word-initially on nouns in Torona, it can also occur on successive words in a sentence in Torona by alliteration as a concord prefix on subsequent adjectives or verbs:

ɾʊk ɾ-ɛɾɛk	‘certain dogs’
ɾɪɟk ɾ-ɔppɔt	‘many goats’
ɾɪɟk ɾ-ɔt̪t̪ɛ	‘few goats’
ɾɪɟk ɾ-ɑɲɔ ɪðʊɾɪk	‘goats go to graze’
ɾəŋgək ɾ-ɔɲɔk ɪðʊɾɪk	‘sheep went to graze’

Concerning approximants, the labiovelar [w] occurs as in [wɪɾa] ‘trees’. [j] is suspected to be either an allophone of the plosive /c/ between vowels or a transitional phone between vowels when one is a high front vowel, as in [ije ɣɪk] ‘lie down’, [ɾɪɟk] ‘goat’.

Concerning prosodic features, no contrastive lexical function for tone is found in the available data. However, some insights into the role of tone, amplitude, and vowel length in Torona are given in the analysis of the dancing text below (section 7).

6. Grammar notes

Some grammatical data was elicited for nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, numerals, demonstratives, collective quantifiers, and pronouns. Some grammatical structures may have been affected by attrition in a dying language. Inflections are generally extracted from phrases or sentences, since paradigms could not be elicited directly.

6.1. Nouns

Singular-plural alternations were only elicited for some nouns, when modifiers */-ullukku/* “one” and */-ɔppɔt/* “many” were added which subcategorise for singular and plural. Nevertheless, three types of singular-plural alternation were observed.

	singular	plural	gloss
Suppletion	wai	kie	‘cow, cows’
	ummík	ɽijɔk	‘goat, goats’
	wɛk	tajɔk	‘leg, legs’
Initial Consonant	kaʊn	ɲaʊn	‘arm, arms’
	kɪɲɛ	nɪɲɛ	‘nose, noses’
	tuðuruk	nuðuruk	‘pig, pigs’
	ɽʊk	ɽʊk	‘dog, dogs’
	pɔɽʊ	ʊɽʊ	‘person,
	ca	ma	persons’ ‘head, heads’
Initial and final consonants	cɪt	kɪk	‘eye, eyes’
	cɪɲít	kɪɲík	‘tooth, teeth’

The first two types, suppletion and initial consonant alternation, are familiar from other Talodi languages

(Schadeberg 1981, Norton 2000, Smits2007, Alaki and Norton 2013). But a further type not previously observed is alternation in both initial and final consonants, observed in the two nouns ‘eye’ and ‘tooth’ and confirmed by eliciting these nouns on two separate occasions. Since initial consonant alternation is the more general pattern, and since in the plurals of ‘eye’ and ‘tooth’ the final consonant is identical to the initial consonant, the initial consonant alternation can be considered the basic one. The word-final consonant harmonises to the velar place of articulation of the word-initial consonant prefix /k-/ , even if another consonant intervenes as in /kipik/ “tooth”.

6.2. Verbs

A few inflections are observed on verbs. A consonant prefix is a subject pronoun or subject concord:

puɾe p-iɾe-t	‘the bird flew’ (alliterative concord)
ɲik ɲ-ɔnda-ðe ɲik	‘water flowed down’ (alliterative concord)
ɾijɔk ɾ-apɔ́ íðúɾík	‘goats are going to graze’ (alliterative concord)
mb-aβiɾitɔɔɔ	‘I go round’ (1sg)
mb-aɲík p-úte	‘I am vomiting’ (1sg, default sg)
ýɣín ɔ-ɔnú	‘they have’ (default pl)

Two past completive suffixes /-ðe/ or /-t/ are observed, as also in Lumun (Shakir et al. 2012:15, 17):

mb-ɲɔ-ðe aɾaɾak	‘I found flies’
ɲik ɲ-ɔnda-ðe ɲik	‘water flowed down’
puɾe p-iɾe-t	‘the bird flew’
ɬuk ɬ-aɲík ɾe p-a-t?	‘Where is the dog come to?’

A locative copula /C-a-ɲik/ “be there, be alive” is used as an auxiliary verb:

mb-a-ɲík p-úte	‘I am vomiting’ (progressive)
ɬuk ɬ-a-ɲík ɾe p-a-t?	‘Where is the dog come to?’ (resultative)

6.3. Adverbs

Some verbs are followed by positional adverbs:

íkɔ ɟík	‘sit down’
ije ɟík	‘lie down’
ɟík ɟundaðe ɟík	‘water flowed down’
əmɔtɔ tɪt	‘split in it’
cɔrɪ ndan	‘pull here (towards speaker)’
kuttu ɟguwə	‘lower (your hands) down’

6.4. Adjectives

Descriptive adjectives show alliterative concord or other morphology:

alliterative concord	ummík w-ɔ-ɟɪ w-	‘black goat’	ummík w-ɔ-ɟɪ w-a w-ɔ-ndan	‘black goat is here’
	ummík w-ɪβuk	‘white goat’	ummík w-ɪβuk w-a w-ɔ-ndan	‘white goat is here’
ɟ- concord	ummík ɟ-ɔ-ttɛ/	‘small goat’	ummík ɟ-ɔ-ttɛ w-a w-ɔ-ndan	‘small goat is here’
ɪ-	ummík ɪ-ttɛ			
	ummík ɪ-ttɪk	‘big goat’	ummík ɪ-ttɪk w-a w-ɔ-ndan	‘big goat is here’

The adjective “small” has a concord /ɟ-/ instead of alliterative concord, presumably marking diminutive. Adjectives may also use /ɪ-/ initially instead of /C-ɔ-/ where C is a concord prefix. All three markers (alliteration, ɟ-, ɪ-) occur when the adjective precedes a predicate “is here”, indicating that the adjective has an attributive function. The adjective /w-ɔ-ndan/ (from /ndan/ meaning towards the speaker) has a predicative function appearing after a copula verb /C-a/.

An indefinite adjective also follows the noun and uses alliterative concord:

tuk t-ɛɛk	‘a certain dog’
ɾuk ɾ-ɛɛk	‘certain dogs’
cɛn c-ɛɛk	‘a certain egg’

mən m-ɛɾɛk ‘certain eggs’

6.5. Numerals

Only the first four numerals could be elicited, and only in noun phrases. These follow the noun and have alliterative concord like adjectives:

pʊɾʊ p-ʊllʊkkʊ	‘one person’
ɲʊɾa ɲ-ɛɾa	‘two bulls’
ɲʊɾa ɲ-ɛɾaβʊllʊk	‘three bulls’
ɲʊɾa ɲ-ɔɟɔɾɪn	‘four bulls’

6.6. Demonstratives

Demonstratives also follow the noun and use alliterative concord, but the concord is placed word-medially not word-initially:

tʊk ɛɲ-d-ɛ	‘this dog’ (near speaker)
túðúrúk ɛn-d-ɪ ɪ-t-aɲ	‘this your (sg) pig’ (near speaker)
tʊk ɛɲ-d-ɛɾɛ	‘that dog’ (far from speaker)

Only a binary distinction between proximal and non-proximal could be elicited for demonstratives, even though a ternary distinction between proximal, medial, and distal is found in Lumun (Smits 2007:47, Shakir et al. 2012:27).

6.7. Collective quantifiers

Two collective terms /appɪɾɪðɪɲ/ and /accɔk/ in Torona are different from other noun modifiers in having no concord:

wɪɾa appɪɾɪðɪɲ	‘all the trees’
ʊɾʊ appɪɾɪðɪɲ	‘all the people’
tʊk appɪɾɪðɪɲ	‘all the dogs’
mən appɪɾɪðɪɲ	‘all the eggs’
ɾɪɟɔk accɔk	‘all the goats’
ɔɾɪ accɔk	‘eat it all!’

The last example shows that a collective term may stand alone in object position. The lack of concord and the occurrence in object position suggest that collective terms are

quantificational nouns. The initial /a-/ could be a historic plural noun prefix (Schadeberg 1981:117).

6.8. Pronouns

Pronoun words occur but a full paradigm could not be constructed:

ᵛᵛᵛ (iŋəβ ^w əŋ aŋɔra)	‘I (in the field weeding)’
əŋa(ŋ?)	‘you sg.’
əŋəŋ	‘we’?, ‘you pl.’?
əŋin (d̥əŋu)	‘they (have)’

Pronouns may also be incorporated on the verb. The incorporated subject pronoun /mb-/ “I” is seen above, under Verbs. The verb /i-təð-in/ “who gives me” (?) probably contains an incorporated object pronoun suffix.

The 2nd person singular possessive pronoun is /C-aŋ/ where C is a concord prefix:

núðúruk n-aŋ	‘your (sg) pigs’
túðúruk ɛn-d-i i-t-aŋ	‘this your (sg) pig’
kwaŋ ŋ-g-aŋ	‘your (sg) hair’

The examples show the possessive pronoun with /i-/ as also recorded on adjectives, and with prenasalization as also recorded on other dependent words following a head word.

7. A text

The speaker performed a dancing text. The text consists of a series of verb phrases – maximally consisting of verb, adverb, and noun – plus some rhythmical syllables. This provides a series of exhortations to dancers and reinforces the dance rhythm.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| kuttu | ŋ-gú:wé-? | kuttu | ŋ-gú:wé-? |
| lower | LINK-down-UTT | lower | LINK-down-UTT |
| ‘Lower your hands down’ | | ‘Lower your hands down’ | |
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| cá:rappa | ‘já:rappa | ‘já:rappa-? |
| raise | raise | raise-UTT |
| ‘Raise, raise, raise’ | | |

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---------------|----------------------------------|---|--|-------|
| 3. | kottu | ŋ-gú:'wə-ʔ | kottu | ŋ-gú:'wə-ʔ | | |
| | lower | LINK-down-UTT | lower | LINK-down-UTT | | |
| | 'Lower your hands down' | | 'Lower your hands down' | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 4. | 'ók'kó | n-'na: | 'rattɪ | ʔ-ɔ:'kɔ | n-'na:ŋ | 'appɔ |
| | dance | LINK-on.it | Rati | UTT-dance | LINK-on.it | Tocho |
| | 'Dance on the floor <i>Rati</i> -style' | | 'Dance on the floor Tocho-style' | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 5. | 'ʔ-a-nɪ | | 'waɾɛ-ɾɛ | ʔ-éʔ'ʔê:i-ʔéʔ'ʔê:i-ʔéʔ'ʔê:i-ʔéʔ'ʔê:i-ʔéʔ'ʔê:i | | |
| | UTT-CONJ-1SG | dance-RED | | UTT-(reduplicating syllables) | | |
| | 'And I am dancing...' | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 5. | kú'wâ-ʔ | | kú'wâ-ʔ | | kú'wâ-ppa-p'pa-p'pa-ppa-p'pa-p'pa-p'pâ | |
| | down-UTT | | down-UTT | | down-(reduplicating syllables) | |
| | 'Down, down, down...' | | | | | |

Repetition is a feature of the text, since all the phrases are repeated either two or three times (with substitution of the modifying noun in the second phrase in line 4), and there is reduplication of the final syllable of the verb */waɾɛ/* in line 5. The rhythmical syllables in lines 5 and 6 are highly repetitive, and they reduplicate the final vowel of the preceding word, */ɛ/* of */waɾɛ/* or */a/* of */kuwa/*.

Some segmental processes occur. In line 4, the final consonant of the positional adverb /*naŋ*/ is deleted before consonant-initial /*rattɪ*/ but remains before vowel-initial /*appɔ*/. Nasal and glottal consonants are also inserted in certain positions. In lines 1, 3, and 4, a linking nasal (LINK) is inserted by the process of prenasalization on a dependent word. And glottal stops are inserted at utterance boundaries (UTT): in lines 1, 2, 3, and 6, a glottal stop is inserted utterance-finally after a word-final vowel, and in lines 4 and 5, a glottal stop is inserted utterance-initially before a word-initial vowel. In line 2 the glottal stop is inserted only after the third occurrence of

/caɾappa/ “raise”, and not after the first two. Hence, the three repetitions together constitute an utterance, and there is voicing of word-initial consonants utterance-medially in the second and third occurrences.

Prosodic features of amplitude, length, and tone appear to be interrelated. Amplitude is indicated with a stress mark (ˈ). Some words have greater amplitude on the first syllable, others on the second syllable, and others on *both* as in [ˈjáˈɾappa] (line 2) and [ˈókˈkó] (line 4).

Vowel lengthening occurs on stressed monosyllables as in [ˈnãː (ŋ)] (line 4), and on non-final open syllables as in [gúːˈwá-ʔ] (line 1 and 3), [cáːˈɾappa] (line 2), [ʔ-ʊːˈkɔ] (line 4), but not [kúːˈwâ-ʔ] (line 6). The alternative realisations [cáːˈɾappa]~[jáˈɾappa] (line 2) and [ókˈkó]~[ʔ-ʊːˈkɔ] (line 4) have vowel length alternating with amplitude, therefore we analyse vowel lengthening as another realisation of stress, and we interpret all occurrences of /ˈcaˈɾapa/ and /ˈʊːkɔ/ as stressed on both first and second syllables. Hence, vowel lengthening is one realisation of stress on the first of two stressed syllables. The alternation [ókˈkó] ~ [ʔ-ʊːˈkɔ] (line 4) also shows that a weighted consonant (*k*) does not lengthen if the preceding vowel lengthens. Another word that can now be interpreted as stressed on both first and second syllables due to vowel lengthening is [ŋ-gúːˈwá-ʔ] (line 1). The absence of lengthening in [kúːˈwâ-ʔ] (line 6) is interpreted as showing that the first syllable is unstressed there.

High tone occurs on both stressed syllables in double-stressed words [ókˈkó] (line 4), [jáˈɾappa] (line 2), [ŋ-gúːˈwá-ʔ] (line 1). High-falling tone contours occur on the words with second-syllable stress, [ʔéʔʔéːɪ] (line 5) and [kúːˈwâ-ʔ] (line 6). So these tone contours can be analysed as further realisations of stress. The text closes with a falling tone [ˈpâ]. Hence, all tone in the text can be predicted from its environment.

The adverb /kuwa/ “down” alternates in several ways between [ŋ-gúːˈwá-ʔ] (lines 1/3) and [kúːˈwâ-ʔ] (line 6). In line 1/3 there is prenasalization and voicing of the initial plosive, but neither occurs in line 6 because the initial plosive is utterance-initial. In lines 1/3 the first vowel /u/ is lengthened due to double

stress, but in line 6 it is not lengthened since only the second syllable is stressed. In lines 1/3 there is a high-high contour due to double stress, but in line 6 there is a high-falling contour due to second-syllable stress. Another alternation is the quality of the second vowel is mid-central [ə] in lines 1/3, but low-central [a] in line 6. The syllable is stressed by greater amplitude in both cases, but there is a tone difference, and we propose that mid-centralisation of /a/ is conditioned by high tone in a final syllableⁱⁱ. The high tone is itself due to the double stress pattern, and hence all the alternations in prosody and quality of vowels follow from the stress difference.

Based on this analysis, the following broad transcription of the text reduces prosodic information to stress marks (') (realized through greater amplitude, vowel lengthening, and tone) and utterance boundaries (//) (at which glottal stops or (text-finally) falling tone and devoicing occur). Two other diacritics show conditioned voicing utterance-medially (ç) and mid-centralisation (ǎ) in a final high tone syllable:

1. kuṭu ŋ-'kʊ'wǎ || kuṭu ŋ-'kʊ'wǎ ||
'lower (your hands) down (x2)'
2. 'caɽapa 'çaɽapa 'çaɽapa ||
'raise (x3)'
3. kuṭu ŋ-'kʊ'wǎ || kuṭu ŋ-'kʊ'wǎ ||
'lower (your hands) down (x2)'
4. 'u'kɔ n-'na 'ratɪ || 'u'kɔ n-'naŋ 'apɔ ||
'dance on (the floor) Rati/Tocho-style'
5. 'a-nɪ 'waɽɛ-ɽɛ || ʔɛ'ʔɛɪ-ʔɛ'ʔɛɪ-ʔɛ'ʔɛɪ-ʔɛ'ʔɛɪ ||
'and I am dancing...'
6. kʊ'wa || kʊ'wa || kʊ'wa-pa-'pa-'pa-pa-'pa-'pa ||
'down (x3)...

This transcription of the text shows the phenomenon of double stress, including the alternation between single stress and double stress on *kuwa* “down” between line 1/3 and line 6. Stress placement and alternation in stress placement must

follow from general principles also, but the text does not clearly reveal these.

8. Conclusion

The documentation of Torona [tqr] presents considerable methodological challenges. The last members of the Torona community dispersed from their last village several decades ago, so the language can no longer be documented on its home ground. Torona had previously been declared extinct (Grimes 1996:403) but our enquiries eventually led to the discovery of an isolated proficient speaker of a great-grandparent generation living in the Mayo district of Khartoum.

Torona [tqr] data could only be elicited using another minority language Tira [tic] as the bridging language, because the speaker was only proficient in Torona and Tira. This was possible to do because Tira is the mother tongue of the second author of this paper. Since the data elicited, the speaker has died. Torona [tqr] is already nearly extinct, and with the passing of Karaḩul Alunga Almendi it may now be extinct. However, a final obstacle to documenting the language correctly is that it is not possible to verify whether or not other isolated speakers in the Talodi area are still living, because the area has been inaccessible due to war since June 2011.

As a result of working with Karaḩul, some basic lexical, grammatical, and text data now exists as a record of the Torona [tqr] language. The word list data confirms that Torona [tqr] is a separate language from its closest relative Lumun [lmd].

Some typologically notable features of the disappearing Torona language are: word-initial flaps, words with combined initial and final consonant alternation for number, absence of concord on collective quantifiers, prenasalization on dependent words, vowel length and tone conditioned by stress, and words with stress on two successive syllables.

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ⁱIt seems possible that low crop yields may have also played more of a role in the overall decline of the Torona community and the abandonment of their other villages in the past.

ⁱⁱSimilarly, high tone occurs on mid central vowels in Acheron (Norton 2013).

Request, complaint or request-complaint? - Speech acts which include the expression of disapproval in two communication cultures of the Cameroonian Grassfieldsⁱ

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Abstract

The paper focuses on speech acts which include the expression of disapproval and negative feelings, loosely characterized by the English term *complaint*, and seek to explore these from the perspective of two communities, Isu and Mën, of the Cameroonian Grassfields (Ring group). In particular, the focus is on the speech act concepts *dìy-dzài* (Isu) and *tʃi-tsàin* (Mën) which straddle the borderline between expressives, i.e. speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions toward the proposition, and directives, i.e. speech acts that aim to cause the addressee to take a particular action, in Searle's terminology (1975:10ff).

While the expression of negative feelings is the prominent intention or illocutionary point in both speech acts, they also incorporate a directive notion, which brings them into the semantic neighbourhood of requests. A contrastive discussion of basic semantic notions brings out that the speech act concepts *dìy-dzài/tʃi-tsàin* do not include confrontative or

offensive elements at all (cf. Leech 1983:104f.), rather their design incorporates indirection from the very start: the addressee of the complaint is not identical with the complaine, i.e. the person who is held directly responsible for causing the complainable. Instead, it is typically a person, superior either by rank, office or age, who is considered to have enough power and influence to set things straight and resolve the cause of the complaint. This implies that adequate definitions of concepts such as Isu *dìy-dzài* and Mèn *tʃi-tsàin* must incorporate two necessary criteria pertaining to felicity conditions: (a) a distinction of addressee and causer of the complainable, (b) reference to a position of powerlessness on the side of the speaker since both cultures lexicalize a parallel distinction pertaining to the social difference between speaker and addressee of the *complaint*.

The paper argues for a two-pronged approach towards an adequate analysis of autochthonous Grassfields concepts of speech acts: (a) a semantic analysis revealing contrastive concepts of speech acts through their lexicalization in local terminology, as explicated by using natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) in section 2; supplemented by (b) an identification of illocutionary acts in authentic discourse plus categorization according to the local terminology (section 3).

1. Introduction

The English labels *request* and *complaint* have become points of crystallisation in current debates on speech acts, i.e. the minimal units to which a communicative intention could

be ascribed (Searle 1969:16). Against the background of the Anglo-American concepts of *request* and *complaint* (Wierzbicka 1985, 1987, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Hill et al. 1986, Trosborg 1995), a host of literature has evolved which seeks to test the universality or diversity of speech act concepts such as these across a widening range of functionally similar concepts in different cultures, e.g. Japanese (Kashiwazaki 1993, Kumatoridani 1995), Chinese (Zhang 1995, Baba and Lian 1992), Hebrew (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), Mexican Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer 2005) and also African languages and cultures such as Akan (Obeng 1999), Igbo (Okolo 1993), Wolof (Irvine 1980), Xhosa (Gough 1995), Zulu (de Kadt 1992, 1995). The evidence assembled there confirms the point that speech act concepts are not congruent in a cross-cultural perspective at all.

What might appear as equivalent to the Anglo-American concepts of *requests* and *complaints* in other, particularly non-European, languages at first sight soon turns out to be at variance with these in crucial details pertaining to intentions, presuppositions, emotional involvement, evaluations and felicity conditions. In order to enable cross-cultural comparison, current approaches to intercultural pragmatics seek to define the meanings of individual speech acts by breaking them down into basic semantic components on these levels of intention(s), presupposition(s), emotion(s) and attitudes(s). In its most rigid form, this break-down could be achieved by taking recourse to the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Wierzbicka 1985, 1987, 1996, Goddard 2006, 2010 and other works).

This contribution focuses on speech acts at the intersection of the *request* domain and the *complaint* domain from the perspective of two communities, Isu and Mɛnⁱⁱ, of the Cameroonian Grassfields and seeks to explore the way they are categorised and embedded into local norms and value systems. *Request* and *complaint* should not be taken as referring to the concepts expressed by the respective English lexical items. For lack of handy independent terms, *request* is rather taken as a hyponym for various illocutionary acts ‘whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker’ (Trosborg 1995:187), while *complaint* should be taken here as a hyponym for various speech acts ‘in which the speaker (complainer) expresses his/her disapproval, negative feelings etc. towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (complainable) and for which he/she holds the hearer (complainee) responsible, either directly or indirectly’ (Trosborg 1995:311-12). Speech act lexicalizations in both target languages attest to a fine-grained spectrum of categories which could be arranged as spinning out between the two poles of (a) directive speech acts, i.e. speech acts which include an imposition on the addressee in that they aim at causing him to take a particular action, and (b) expressive speech acts, i.e. speech acts which include the expression of the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition (cf. Searle 1976:11f.).

Methodologically, this contribution tries to integrate two complementary approaches to speech acts: semantic analysis and discourse analysis.ⁱⁱⁱ Semantic analysis, on the one hand,

is needed to identify cognitively contrastive concepts of speech acts through their lexicalization in local terminologies, i.e. to identify autochthonous categorizations of speech acts (section 2). Discourse analysis, on the other hand, is needed to reveal how speech acts are actually performed in different situations (section 3) in order to deduce local norms of communication from the way the linguistic performance co-varies with emic parameters of the setting such as social status, age and gender.

2. Semantic distinctions in the fields of requesting and complaining

Both target languages, Isu and Men, lexicalize (a) concepts which designate as their semantic core an illocutionary act ‘whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker’ (Trosborg 1995:187), i.e. speech acts in the *request* domain, as well as (b) concepts which could roughly be assigned to the domain of *complaints*, as long as we adopt part of the definition given by (Trosborg 1995: 311f.) according to which they include the illocutionary act in which the speaker (complainer) expresses his/her disapproval, negative feelings etc. towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (complainable). While speech acts of the first group (a) clearly fall into Searle’s broad category of directives in that they include the basic intention on the side of the speaker to try ‘to get the hearer to do something’ (Searle 1976:11), speech acts of the second group

(b) qualify as Searle's expressives by virtue of their paramount intention 'to express the [speaker's] psychological state (...) about a state of affairs' (Searle 1976:12).

The range of Isu and Mën lexicalizations which encode concepts in these two domains are given in tables (8.1.-8.2.)^{iv} along with approximate definitions of their meanings.

a) Isu	approximation of meaning in English
<i>báb</i>	'ask for sth. on which the speaker can lay a rightful claim'
<i>ɲwá</i>	'beg, ask for sth. on which the speaker can lay no rightful claim'
<i>bwóʔ káwó</i>	(< clasp hand) 'plead, ask for sth. on which the speaker can lay no rightful claim, shows humility'
<i>bwóʔ-ɲìà</i> <i>káwó</i>	(< clasp-give hand) 'implore, shows humility, urgency and desperation'
<i>dzàì</i>	'tell sb. to do sth.'
<i>ɲìà kálâɲ</i>	'give an order'
b) Mën	approximation of meaning in English
<i>pfɛf</i>	'ask for sth. on which the speaker can lay a rightful claim'
<i>ndóɲ</i>	'ask for sth. on which the speaker can lay no rightful claim'
<i>tʃátá</i>	'beg so., plead'
<i>mbáʔtá</i>	'plead (so.) urgently'
<i>tsàin</i>	'tell sb. to do sth.'

Table 8.1: Speech act lexicalizations in the *request* domain

a) Isu	approximation of meaning in English
<i>dzài</i>	‘say, complain directly to the causer of the complainable or to sb. responsible to deal with it’
<i>dìy-dzài</i>	(< ‘cry-say’) ‘cry for change, complain to a superior (not identical with the causer of the complainable, but responsible to deal with it)’
<i>kwà</i>	‘shout, express dissatisfaction to an inferior, admonish’
<i>dìy ùtswôd</i>	(< ‘cry trouble’) ‘lament misfortune or calamity’
<i>dìy ηgò?</i>	(< ‘cry burden’) ‘lament one’s acute and never-ending hardship’
<i>yíálí</i>	‘complain naggingly about things considered unimportant, associated with selfish desire, lack of satisfaction and childish behaviour’
<i>mbó?ó</i>	‘nag continuously due to permanent dissatisfaction’
<i>ηwò?-dzài</i>	(< ‘burn-say’) ‘fret about something, speak disgruntledly about someone’
b) Men	approximation of meaning in English
<i>tsàin</i>	‘tell, complain directly to the causer of the complainable or to sb. responsible to deal with it’
<i>fúλ?tà</i>	‘lay open, confess, complain to a superior’

<i>tʃi-tsàin</i>	(< ‘cry-tell’) ‘complain to a superior (not identical with the causer of the complainable, but responsible to deal with it)’
<i>zə̀</i>	‘quarrel, fight, complain to an inferior’
<i>púa</i>	‘bark, shout, complain to an inferior, admonish’
<i>fô ēwə̀mnə̀</i>	(< ‘give talk’) ‘complain to an inferior, admonish’
<i>támná-wə̀mnə̀</i>	(< ‘shoot-talk’) ‘complain to an inferior; reproach’
<i>fuʌʔtə̀ ētsûs</i>	(< ‘lay open trouble’) lament misfortune or calamity
<i>lúŋə̀-ndúə̀</i>	(< ‘perish-go’) ‘lament misfortune or calamity’

Table 8.2: Speech act lexicalizations in the *complaint* domain

While these compilations attest to a relatively high degree of semantic differentiation in both domains for both languages, they fail to bring out two things clearly: (a) the crucial semantic distinctions of speech act concepts within one language, and (b) the degrees of semantic equivalence or overlap of speech acts concepts across both languages and in comparison to English speech act concepts in the respective domains. Some cases in point are the Men lexicalizations *zə̀*, *púa*, *fô ēwə̀mnə̀* and *támná-wə̀mnə̀*, all of which can be rendered as ‘complain to an inferior’ in English.

In order to avoid the clumsiness, vagueness and potential circularity of definitions which rely on approximated translations in English, we adopt Natural Semantic

Metalanguage (Wierzbicka 1987, 1996, Goddard 2006, 2010) for explicating central speech act concepts of both domains in a contrastive way, as presented in table (8.3). Since this approach appropriately captures basic semantic components^v, it will both render individual speech act concepts maximally transparent at a level of maximal semantic resolution and enable cross-linguistic comparison. In order to enhance the visibility of contrasts in table (8.3), semantic components have been explicitly labelled according to their type of content as “dictum”, i.e. “the overt content of the utterance” (Wierzbicka 1987:19), “presupposition” or “assumption” (Wierzbicka 1987) (e.g. about the speaker’s right to perform the act or about the addressee’s obligation to take particular action), “emotion” and “intention” (i.e. whether the act is aimed at influencing the addressee’s awareness and/or inducing his action, or intended to express the speaker’s emotions and attitudes) and arranged in a uniform order^{vi}. The advantage of this style of presentation resides in its potential to pinpoint semantic overlaps as well as decisive divergences of similar, yet different speech act concepts.

Thus, Isu and Men *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* on the one hand and *kwà/zè* on the other hand share the emotional component “I feel something bad because of X”, while they differ decisively with respect to the responsibility of the addressee (presupposition 4). The price to pay for such maximization of inter conceptual comparability, however, is a certain amount of redundancy and a loss in cohesiveness as compared to Wierzbicka’s explications which stick as closely as possible to an iconic representation of causal and consecutive relations

between the semantic components in a given concept
(1997:19).

	Isu <i>báb</i> Men <i>pfíf</i>	Isu <i>dzài¹</i> Men <i>tsàin¹</i>	Isu <i>bwɔʔ káwɔ</i> Men <i>tʃátá</i>	Isu <i>dzài²</i> Men <i>tsàin²</i>	Isu <i>kwà</i> Men <i>zɔ</i>	Isu <i>dìy-dzài</i> Men <i>tʃi-tsàin</i>	Isu <i>dìy ùtswɔd</i> Men <i>fuɔʔtə̀ ētsós</i>
Dictum	I say: I want X (to happen)	I say: I want you to do X		I say: X is happening	I say: you did something bad (X)	I say: something bad (X) is happening (to me)	I say: something more than bad (X) is happening (to me)
presupposition [right of SPK]	1 I know that I can say this to you			I think that I can say this to you	I think that you know that I am someone who can say this to you	I think that you are someone to whom I can say this	---
presupposition [obligation of ADR]	2 I think that you have to do X		I know that you don't have to do X	I think that you know that I want you to do something	---	I know that you can do something that would cause something to happen that would be good (for me)	---
presupposition [expectation of SPK]	3 I think that you will do X		I don't know whether you will do X	I don't know whether you will do something because of X	I think that you are someone who will do what I say	I think that you will do something because of X	I know I can't do anything to cause something to happen that

						would cause me to feel better
presupposition [responsibility of ADR]	4	---		I think that you caused X to happen	I know that you did not cause X to happen	
presupposition [valuation of outcome]	5	I think of X as something that will be good (for me)		---		
emotion		---	I feel something because of X	I feel something bad because of X		I feel something more than bad because of X and because I think that I can't do anything about it
intention [cause awareness]	1	---		I say this because I want to cause you to think about what you should do	I say this because I want to cause you to know about X	I say this because I want to cause someone to know about X
intention [cause action]	2		I say this because I want to cause you to do X	I say this because I want you to do something because of X	I say this because I want to cause you to do something because of X that would cause something to	

					happen that would be good (for me)	
intention [express attitude / emotion]	3		I say this, in this way, because I want to cause you to know that X is important to me		I say this because I want to show what I think about X	I say this because I want to show what I feel thinking about X

DIRECTIVES

Table 8.3: Contrastive definition of selected lexicalizations in the domain of requesting and complaining in NSM for Isu, Men and English

The Isu and Men speech act concepts listed in table (8.3) have been arranged roughly according to the degree of prominence of a directive vs. expressive character. Thus, speech acts on the left side of the table such as *báb/pff*, *dzàì¹/tsàin¹* and *bwó? káwó/tfátá* express – to varying degrees – a directive intention in Searle’s sense in that they are performed in order to ‘get the hearer to do something’ (Searle 1976:11). Speech acts on the far right side of the table such as *dìy ùtswôd/fuλ?tà ētsôs* rather have a prominent expressive character in that they ‘express the [speaker’s] psychological state (...) about a state of affairs’ (Searle 1976:12).

The opposite inclination of the directive and expressive gradients could roughly be followed throughout the levels of their semantic representation. Thus, the directive purpose is prominently present in the dictum of *dzàì¹/tsàin¹* and *bwó? káwó/tfátá* as well as in presuppositions 2 and 3 of *báb/pff*, while it tends to sink across the board to presupposition 2 and intention 1 in *dzàì²/tsàin²*, to the intention 2 in *kwà/zè* until it finally disappears from the concepts of *dìy ùtswôd/fuλ?tà ētsôs*. On the contrary, the expression of negative feelings makes its leftmost appearance in the emotional component of *dzàì²/tsàin²*, rising to maximal prominence in both the emotional component and the dictum of *kwà/zè*, *dìy-dzàì/tfì-tsàin* and of *dìy ùtswôd/fuλ?tà ētsôs*.

In the following, the speech act concepts presented in table (8.3) will be examined for their semantic components in more detail. The discussion is organized in two parts; the more directive speech acts will be examined before the more expressive ones. The central point to be elaborated

contrastively below is that the speech acts *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* and *kwà/zə̀* take an intermediate position in that they conflate both directive and expressive notions. The expressive notions are explicated in the dictum, in the emotional component and in intention 3, while the directive component is obvious in intention 2.

All three of the directive speech acts presented on the left-hand side of table (8.3), namely *báb/pfíf*, *dzài¹/tsàin¹* and *bwóʔ káwóʔ /tfátá*, fit into Trosborg's (1995) definition of *requests* in that the speaker of either of these acts aims at causing the addressee to perform an act, as displayed in the dictum and intention 2 of their respective definitions, and in that this act is regarded as beneficial for the speaker, as explicated in presupposition 5.

They differ, however, with respect to the speaker's focus of the request which is explicated in the dictum and expressed as immediate post verbal direct object. While speech acts of the *báb/pfíf*-type are topic-oriented, (i.e. the speaker focuses on the requested item or service), in speech acts of the *dzài¹/tsàin¹*-type and the *bwóʔ káwóʔ /tfátá*-type the addressee and the requested item or service seem to be of equal importance, as becomes obvious in the contrast of the respective dicta. This is reflected by the syntactic structure of reports of these acts, as shown below. In the topic-oriented speech acts such as *pfíf* (cf. example 4) and *báb* (cf. example 5), the requested item or service is expressed as immediate post verbal direct object, e.g. *kê* 'money' (4) and *mànk^húʔí* 'respect' (5), while the addressee is optionally expressed as

complement of a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition *sā* (4) or *â* (5).

2.1. Topic-oriented dictum

Mèn: *pfíf*

- (4) è *vá pfíf* *kê* (*sā* *mī*).
 S3sg P1 ask.with.rightful.claim money (PREP 1sg)
 “He/she asked (back) money (from me)/ He/she asked (me) for money.”

Isu: *báb*

- (5) ù *bábá* *mànk^hú?i* (*â* *àwá*)
 S3sg ask.with.rightful.claim:IPF6:respect (PREP 2:children)
^h*wé*.
 3sg:POSS
 “He/she is demanding respect (from his children).”

In speech acts such as Mèn *tfátá* (6) and Isu *bwó? káwó* (7), the addressee is either encoded in immediately post verbal position (cf. examples 6a-b and 7a) or not mentioned and the requested item/service follows the phraseme encoding the speech act (cf. example 7b). In case of the addressee being the direct object, e.g. *véiŋ* (6a) and ^h*wé* (7a), the requested item or service is introduced in a complement phrase following the quotation marker *nā* (6a) or complementizer *nà* (7a) respectively. The addressee in such cases is repeated as the subject of the complement phrase, and the requested action is encoded in the subordinate verb phrase. The item or action requested can also be introduced by the preposition *sā* in Mèn (6b) or *á^hná* in Isu (7b)

2.2. Intermediate between topic-oriented and addressee-oriented

Mèn: *tʃátá*

- (6) a. *m̄ tʃátá⁴ véɪn nì*
 S1sg beg:IPF 3sg QUOT:S3sg
 “I begged him/her to stay at home.”

tsísá ndē.
 sit:IPF:SUBJ house
 “I begged him/her to stay at home.”

- b. *m̄ tʃátá vèin sē kè.*
 S1sg beg:IPF 3sg.ns PREP money
 “I begged him/her for money.”

Isu: *bwóʔ káwó*

- (7) a. *má bwóʔ[?] ʔtsá ʔwé nà wó kíy n àù*
 S1sg clasp INT 3sg PREP7:hand 7-OF COMPL
 “I begged him/her to stay at home.”

dàʔʔ tsá ʔndáw.
 S3sg.stay INT house
 “I begged him/her to stay at home.”

- b. *yú bwóʔʔ kàwó á⁴n-í-dzìjì.*
 S3pl clasp:IPF hand PREP-VN-speak
 “They are requesting (permission) to speak.”

Speech acts of the *dzàì¹/tsàin¹*-type reveal a syntactic construction which is very similar to the *tʃátá/bwóʔ káwó*-type cited above, but differ in syntactic representation of the addressee: it is not possible to suppress mention of the addressee in the complement clause, while its mention in the main clause is optional (cf. examples 8-9).

Mèn: *tsàin*

- (8) *mā tsâin (sā yò) nô néin yié'*
 S1sg:P1 tell:IPF (PREP2sg) QUOT:S2sg do:SUBJ/IMP thing
téin.
 DEF
 “I have told/asked you to do that thing.”

Isu: *dzài*

- (9) *ù dzài (â yù) nè yú dósò mój.*
 3sg say PREP 3pl COMPL 3pl stay quiet
 “He/she told them to be quiet.”

Further, the Isu and Mèn speech acts with a prominent directive character reveal a lexicalized distinction with regard to the rightful claim of the speaker (cf. presupposition 1) and the obligation of the addressee to fulfil the request (cf. presupposition 2) which in turn leads to the contrast in presupposition 3 concerning the expectation of the speaker about whether his/her request is likely to be fulfilled.

2.3. Rightful vs- non-rightful claim

- (10) *yú báb 'tsá bwô? kà*
 S3pl ask.with.rightful.claim INT 7:space 7
 “They demand a chance to speak.”
dzɛ'ŋá k-íy.
 speak 7-OF
 “They demand a chance to speak.”
- (11) *yú bwósó kàwó á'n-í-dzɛ̀ŋì.*
 S3pl clasp:IPF 7:hand PREP-VN-speak
 “They are requesting (permission) to speak.”

While the subject of the report in (10) has the right to speak and is simply demanding his/her turn, and is therefore

eligible to perform an act of *báb*, the subject in (11) has no right to speak and must therefore perform an act of *bwó? káwó*.

The same criterion underlies the difference in the *Men* examples (12-13). The subject of the report of *pfíf* in (12) is understood as the rightful owner of the money. In contrast, the subject of *tfátá* in (10) is understood as begging for money on which he or she cannot lay a rightful claim.

Men: *pfíf* vs. *tfátá*

- (12) è v́á pfíf kê (sā mī).
 S3sg P1 ask.with.rightful.claim money (PREP 1sg)
 “He/she asked (back) money from me/ He/she asked me for
 (his/her) money.”

- (13) m̄ tfátá vèin sē kê.
 S1sg beg 3sg PREP money
 “I begged him/her for money.”

In the case of *báb/pfíf* and *dzàì¹/tsàin¹* the speaker’s assumption about the addressee’s obligation to fulfil the request is determined to some extent by the particular social relation of the interlocutors, as rendered in presupposition 1. In the case of *bwó? káwó/tfátá* the status relation seems to be less important: such acts can be performed out of a position of powerlessness, but cases in which the speaker is in a superior position are also common in our corpus (e.g. when he/she wants to demonstrate humility).

The decisive point is that by performing an act of the *bwó? káwó/tfátá*-type the speaker wants to unmistakably make clear that what he/she requests is of special importance to him/her,

as is rendered in the emotional component and intention 3 of the NSM definition.

Such an emotional involvement is absent in the context of acts of *báb/pfíf* and *dzàì¹/tsàin¹*. This means, with regard to their directive and/or expressive content, speech acts of the latter type can be categorized as mere directives. They do not contain any expressive element. On the other hand, speech acts of the *bwó? káwó?/tfátá*-type, while predominantly being directives (cf. the respective dictum and intention² in table (8.3)), contain an expressive semantic component as well.

Apart from respective judgements made by cultural insiders, the claim that *bwó? káwó?/tfátá* include expressive notions is supported by two further observations: (a) both Isu and Men lexicalize speech act concepts (Isu *ɲwà* and Men *ndóìŋ*) which contrast minimally with *bwó? káwó?/tfátá* by their lack of the notion of emotional involvement and intensified importance; (b) the use of Isu *bwó? káwó?*, literally meaning ‘clasp hand’, as a requested speech act verb results from a metonymical expansion of the gesture that may accompany the verbal act, and signals intense and heartfelt desire or passion, serious concern, sincerity and humility on the part of the speaker performing the act.

The expressive speech acts displayed on the right-hand side of table (8.3) (*dzàì²/tsàin²*, *kwà/zò,dìy-dzàì/tfì-tsàin* and *dìy ùtswôd/fuà?tə ētsôs*) match Trosborg’s (1995) definition of “complaints” in that the speaker of either of those acts expresses dissatisfaction and/or negative feelings about particular circumstances, as rendered in the explications of

the dictum, the emotional component and intention 3 of the NSM definitions.

The differences in the explications of the respective dicta account for the fact that acts of *kwà/zɔ̀* are addressee-oriented, i.e. they demand an addressee (cf. *wà* in (14) and *mí* in (15)) as immediate post verbal direct object, while acts of *dìy-dzàì/tʃì-tsàin* and *dìy ùtswôd/fuàʔtə̀ ētsô* are rather centred on the topic of grievance, i.e. the complainable is expressed obligatorily either in a complement phrase following the complementizer *nà* as in the Isu example (16) or as the direct object of the verb as shown in the Mɛn example (17). The expression of the addressee is optional, e.g. as complement of the preposition *â* (16) or *sə̀* (17-18).

2.4. Addressee-oriented

Isu: *kwà*

- (14) *ù kwà wà nə wá fán nə*
 S3sg shout 1:child COMPL 1:child return COMPL
 “He/she reprimanded the child for being late.”
 sóʔŋə f-íy mə tsìy.
 19:time 19-OF P1foc pass
 “He/she reprimanded the child for being late.”

Mɛn: *zɔ̀*

- (15) *è vɔ́ zɔ̀ mí.*
 S3sg P1 quarrel 1sg
 “He/she has quarrelled with me.”

2.5. Intermediate between topic-oriented and addressee-oriented

Isu: *dìy-dzài*

- (16) *wíy y-ám bú dìy-dzài (â mià) nà*
 1:wife 1-1sg.POSS come cry-say (PREP 1sg) COMPL
mbòŋ t-ìy jí mà àsáŋ í'yé
 13:cows 13-OF eat finish 6:maize 3log
 “My wife came and complained (to me) that cows have eaten up all her maize.”

Mèn: *tʃi-tsàin*

- (17) *è tʃi-tsàin ŋgì? (sā mī).*
 S3sg cry-say:IPF trouble (PREP1sg)
 “He/she complained to me.”

2.6. Topic-oriented

Mèn: *fʊlʔtə ētsûs*

- (18) *è fʊlʔtə ētsûs (sā mī).*
 S3sg confess: IPF 5:suffering (PREP 1sg)
 “He/she confessed suffering (to me).”

Moreover, *dìy-dzài/tʃi-tsàin* and *dìy ùtswôd/fʊlʔtə ētsûs* differ with respect to the degree of perceived gravity of the grievance: *dìy ùtswôd* and *fʊlʔtə ētsûs* refer to situations of upgraded severity, which is reflected in the phrasing “more than bad” in the dictum and the emotional component of the NSM definition in table (8.3). While the circumstance of destroyed crops in example (16) is regarded as a serious problem for the woman, signalled by the use of *dìy-dzài*, an utterance like (19) shows the speaker’s deep despair at being seemingly overpowered by his difficulties, and is therefore classified as an act of *dìy ùtswôd* in Isu.

Isu: performance of *dìy ùtswôd*

(19) *mà kʰú zzìzzí fə dzóŋə f-ìy nî*
 S1sg know 19:short.story 19SO:be Good 19-OF F2

kwái kə? wài miá!
 encounter never NEG1sg”

“I know that nothing good will ever happen to me!”

The observation that the addressee is of less importance in the context of Isu *dìy ùtswôd* and Men *fʊlʔtə ētsôs* is also reflected by the empty fields of presuppositions 1 and 2 that refer to the power relation between the interlocutors. The specific relation between speaker and addressee is decisive in the case of the three speech act types of *kwà/zə* vs. *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* vs. *dzài²/tsàin²* (cf. presupposition 1). While felicity conditions for *dzài²/tsàin²* are insensitive to the social status of the interlocutors, speech acts of the *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* type have an upward orientation, whereas speech acts of the *kwà/zə* type rather have a downward orientation in the social hierarchy. These orientations clearly correlate with another difference in felicity conditions (cf. presupposition 4): the upward oriented speech act *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* is addressed to a person who is not identical with the causer of the grievance, but rather expected to deal with the matter by virtue of his/her elevated social status. *Dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* invokes the addressee’s duty of care, thus he/she is regarded as indirectly responsible.

The downward oriented speech act *kwà/zə*, on the contrary, is directly addressed to the causer of the grievance, i.e. it is typically performed by superiors to express

dissatisfaction with a state of affairs for which they hold their inferiors directly responsible. Therefore it often emphasizes the addressee's mistakes, errors and shortcomings, recurring on his/her duties and inferior status in a hierarchy.

As evidence of the non-identity of complaineé and causer of the complainable, example (20) illustrates a felicitous complaint of the *dìy-dzài*-type in Isu which also exemplifies the performative use of this lexical item: a woman addressing her compound head (who is her superior) complains about a leaking roof, which is immediately recognised by the addressee as an off-record request for help. The speech act is felicitous because the addressee has not caused the complainable, however, he is considered as the person responsible for solving the problem due to his position as compound head.

2.7. Non-identity of addressee and causer of the complainable

Isu: *dìy-dzài*

- (20) *má díy bū dīy-dzāi nà ndáw*
 1sg want SO:come SO:cry-SO:say COMPL 9:house
y-ám tsémá ŋwǝ
 9-1sg.POSS leak:IPF CF

“I want to come and complain that my house is leaking.”

The non-identity of addressee and causer of the complainable is crucial to the felicity conditions of *dìy-dzài*/*tǝ-tsàin*, which can be seen in examples (21-23): with a third party addressee the usage of *dìy-dzài* in reports such as (21-

22) is acceptable, whereas it would result in unacceptable reports such as (23) as soon as addressee and causer of the grievance are identical.

Isu: *dìy-dzài*

- (21) *wíy* *y-ám* *bû* *dìy-dzài* *â* *mià*
 1:wife 1-1sg.POSS come cry-say PREP 1sg
nà *mbòŋ* *t-ìy* *ní* *mà* *àsánŋ* *t'ýé*
 COMPL 13:cows 13-OF eat finish 6:maize 3log
 “My wife came and complained to me that cows have eaten up all her maize.”

- (22) *wíy* *y-ám* *bû* *dìy-dzài* *nà* *wò* *ŋgé*
 1:wife 1-1sg.POSS come cry-say COMPL 2sg much
nìà *ìyé* *nà* *fà?* *k-ìy*
 give 3log PREP 7:work 7-OF
 “My wife came and complained that you gave her too much work.”

- (23) *wíy* *y-ám* *bû* **dìy-dzài* *â* *mià*
 1:wife 1-1sg.POSS come *cry-say PREP 1sg
nà *fà?* *kà* *má* *nìà* *â* *wè*
 COMPL 7:work 7 1sg give PREP 3sg
ká *ŋgé* *dùw* *ŋwǝ*
 7 much hard CF
 “My wife came and complained to me that the work I gave her is too difficult.”

Speech acts addressed directly to the causer of a grievance who is of equal or superior status to the speaker are simply expressed by *dzài²/tsàin²* ‘say’ and not by *dìy-dzài/tŋ-tsàin*. An utterance like (24) therefore is a perfectly permissible report of the wife’s complaint. As soon as *dìy/tŋ* “cry” comes in, however, it means that the speech act is addressed to someone else other than the causer of the grievance.

2.8. Identity of addressee and causer of complainable

Isu: *dzài*

- (24) *wíy y-ám dzíy[†] â miə nə fâ?*
 1:wife 1-1sg.POSS say PREP 1sg COMPL 7:work
kà má jîə â wè ká ŋgé dūw ŋwə
 7 1sg give PREP 3sg 7 much hard CF
 “My wife said to me that the work I gave her is very difficult.”

The distinction of power relations which is lexicalized in the contrast of Isu *kwà* vs. *dìy-dzài* becomes obvious in the juxtaposition of (25) versus (26): while (25) is an acceptable report of the situation, (26) is comically inappropriate since it creates the misleading impression that the boss is somehow powerless and in an inferior position which would force him to resort to *dìy-dzài* instead of simply performing *kwà*.

2.9. Hierarchically downwards oriented expression of dissatisfaction

Isu: *kwà* vs. *dìy-dzài*

- (25) *wù ù nèe w-iy kwà miə dzìy nə má*
 1:person 1 big 1-OF shout 1sg say COMPL 1sg
fâ? dzwâb tsá
 SJN:work SJN:good INT
 “The boss admonished me that I should work well.”
- (26) *wù ù nèe w-iy *dìy miə dzìy nə má*
 1:person 1 big 1-OF *cry 1sg say COMPL 1sg
fâ? dzwâb tsá
 SJN:work SJN:good INT
 “The boss complained to me saying that I should work well.”

Regarding the intentions, with the exception of acts of *dzàì²/tsàìn²*, the speech acts belonging to the *complaint* domain share the aspect of the speaker's wish to express his or her feelings and/or attitudes, as is explicated in intention 3. In the case of *dìy ùtswôd/fuλ²tə ētsô*s this is the only intention. These acts do not target an immediate change but merely imply hope for amelioration or solution in the long run. If an addressee reacts to such complaints, he/she does so out of empathy and not out of responsibility attributed to him or her. In contrast, by performing acts of *kwà/zə* and *dìy-dzàì/tfì-tsàìn* the speaker calls upon the direct or indirect responsibility of the addressee and prompts him/her to take action as rendered in intention 2.

For *dìy-dzàì* the inclusion of both semantic components, an expression of negative feelings and a request concerning a change of a dissatisfying situation, is supported by the observation that native speakers tend to translate this speech act lexicalization differently into English: some prefer to render it as “complain” others as “plead” in English.

The contrast between *dzàì¹/tsàìn¹* vs. *dzàì²/tsàìn²* resides in the prominence of the directive notions. While *dzàì¹/tsàìn¹* includes a straightforward expression of directive intentions, as obvious in the dictum and intention 2, in *dzàì²/tsàìn²* the directive intention is less prominent which is reflected by its omission in the dictum and its back grounding in presupposition 2 and intention 1. Accordingly, the speech acts *dzàì²/tsàìn²* are often used to (indirectly) convey dissatisfaction with the described circumstances, and simultaneously (indirectly) request the addressee to do

something about that dissatisfying situation, though both these intentions must be inferred by the addressee from the specific communicative situation.

In the case of a person whose fowl has been eaten by a neighbour's dog, for instance, an information like (27), which would be categorized as an example of *dzàì²/tsàìn²*, is sufficient for the neighbour to immediately understand, that (a) the loss of the fowl is quite deplorable on account of its cultural and material value, and that (b) he/she as the owner of the dog is expected to compensate the material damage.

Mèn: performance of *tsàìn²*

- (27) *pʰú zé zā kpól mbví zīm.*
 dog 5:2sg.POSS 5:P1 eat:PF 9:fowl 9:1sg.POSS
 "Your dog has eaten my fowl."

Although the neighbour is held directly responsible for the damage because he/she has not taken care of his/her dog adequately, a direct reproach as well as a direct request for repair would be inappropriate since it would debase the neighbour and deny his/her social competence to interpret the information as what it is: an expression of dissatisfaction and a request for compensation.

In generalising on the English speech act *complain*, various authors point out central features such as the following: complaints are directly addressed to the causer of the complainable (Trosborg 1995:311 f.). Therefore, they have a conflictive function and 'are by their very nature designed to cause offence' (Leech 1983:104-105). They are 'highly threatening to the social relationship between speaker and hearer' (Trosborg 1995:312) since the speaker 'potentially

disputes, challenges or bluntly denies the social competence of the complaineé' (Edmondson and House 1981:145). While most of these semantic characterisations hold for speech acts of the *kwà/zò* type, they completely fail to characterize the concept of *dìy-dzài/tfî-tsàin*. The basic reason for this is that felicity conditions of *dìy-dzài/tfî-tsàin* demand the non-identity of complaineé and causer of the complainable, i.e. the concept of *dìy-dzài/tfî-tsàin* builds in vicariousness from the very start, avoiding a direct confrontation of complainant and causer of the complainable.

With this design, the act of *dìy-dzài* does not cause offence, but is rather designed to avoid it. As a consequence, it does not at all threaten the social relationship between speaker and addressee, but instead intensifies a bond of confidence between them since the speaker puts his trust into the addressee to solve the problem and remove the complainable. The act does not challenge the addressee's social competence; on the contrary it heightens it by construing him/her as someone with superior authority and capability to bring about change.

3. The performance of complaint-requests

Acts of *dìy-dzài/tfî-tsàin* could be labelled complaint-requests for their twofold intention of expressing dissatisfaction and making a request at the same time. They can be subcategorized according to the formality of their performative context. Formal complaint-requests of this type are usually directed towards addressees with an elevated

official function who can act as a mediator, e.g. the Fon or the quarter head. They are tied to the frame of a particular occasion such as quarter-head meetings, audiences at the Fon's palace or the public event of a new Fon's inauguration – where they tend to follow a fixed script (see Kießling, Neumann and Schröter 2011 for details).

Informal complaint-requests of the *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* type are also characterized by asymmetry in that the addressee is deemed superior by social, economic or prestige criteria. In contrast to formal complaint-requests, however, the context is not constrained by some ceremonial script, and the addressee could be anybody whom the speaker considers capable of taking action on his/her behalf towards resolving the grievance.

A particularly common type of such informal complaint-requests is addressed to urban dwellers upon their occasional returns to their home villages: childhood friends who have stayed in the village complain to them about adverse life conditions with the intention to obtain gifts or money from the visitors. The following example from Isu is a rather complex speech event of this type. On the macro-level presented in (28), a series of three gradually intensified complaint-requests of the *dìy-dzài*- type are used as “off-record” strategies to relay a request.

The main protagonists are two men in their thirties, L and M^{vii}, who are childhood-friends and have both grown up in the village of Isu. While L has remained there, M left the village years ago for Yaoundé where he earns a living as a teacher. Upon the occasion of one of M's sporadic returns to Isu village,

L performs a complex speech act which can be categorized as an instance of a complaint-request: its intention on the surface is to express despair about dire living conditions while simultaneously targeting M's sense of responsibility and induce him to lend financial support to ease L's situation. Its complexity arises from its "off-record" realisation by a series of sub-acts of the *dìy-dzài* type, i.e. gradually intensified successive statements of negative feelings towards a deplorable state of affairs caused by various calamities and incidents of personal failure. Even though M and L are peers, M is in a superior position by virtue of his status as a townsman who is perceived by the villagers as a social climber who has escaped rural poverty and has access to all the riches of the city.

In the first stage (A), L starts a complaint about his poverty by a move which could be termed *zà?à ídúw*[†] 'lay the foundation'^{viii} in Isu. It consists of three steps: two explanations and one exclamation. First, L elaborates on how he has no steady source of income. Second, he recounts the failed efforts he has made to alleviate his poverty. This is important as a justification for his underlying request since it is supposed to demonstrate that conditions for making a living in Isu are generally bad, i.e. it is not him personally who is to blame for the failure of his efforts. In the exclamation which takes the form of a hypothetical statement, L gives a concrete specification of his need of 200.000 CFA as solution to the problem, i.e. to remove the grievance addressed in his complaint. By conventional implicature, this exposes that the complaint is really intended as an off-record request for

financial support to enable him to leave the village for a better life.

Since L does not seem to be satisfied with the elocutionary effect (M remains silent), he launches his second attack in stage (B) in which he upgrades his complaint by two further explanations and two exclamations – a move which could be termed *dzài ló lí* ‘*tsá* *ùtswôd* “aggravate” (< ‘say pile up troubles’). The explanations are intended to show that it is not unreasonable greediness which prompts him to request this sum, but rather his responsibility for his pregnant girlfriend. The first exclamation adds a time frame to his indirect request for financial support which is a further upgrade. The second exclamation boils down to a pessimistic statement of utter despair which is intended to arouse pity, an act which is termed *dì y ngò?* ‘lament’ (< ‘cry heavy burden’).

Since M still does not react to L’s lament in the way L had hoped for, L resorts to another strategy in stage (C) by inquiring directly (*báb-kô?* “ask see”) about the duration of M’s absence from the village before his next visit. By this move he raises the pressure on M: he tries to elicit a pre-commitment from M regarding his request and minimise M’s options to evade. Now finally M is forced to make a move. But instead of giving the desired pre-commitment, he gives a direct answer which defers the problem.

At the same time he resorts to a diversionary tactic in stage (D) by persuading L to accompany him to the house of the grandmother and guardian of his first child where he is supposed to pick up a gift of groundnuts. This diversion has a double function: first, it allows M to alleviate the pressure of

L's insistent complaint-request by deflecting L's attention to his own agenda. Second, it incorporates L into M's strategy to ward off unwelcome complaint-requests from that grandmother with whom he has a strained and complicated relationship since she would not want to raise such complaint-requests to M while an outsider to the family was present. While they walk up to her house, L shows empathy and interest by asking about a health problem of M's, suspending his complaint-request for a while.

At the house the grandmother dominates the conversation with other matters at first, but as she is engaged otherwise, L launches the third and final upgraded follow-up of his complaint-request in stage (E), probably inspired by the assumption that M will feel grateful towards him for acting as a protective shield and thus more inclined to return the favour. This final step is performed in English, not in Isu any longer. The act of code switching in itself seems to have two functions here: first, it screens off the dialogue from the outside, excluding the grandmother and her children who are present and are not fluent in English. Second, it lends additional importance to the content by invoking formality. In this move, which is equally termed *dzàì lúlí* ⁴*tsá ùtswôd* "aggravate" (< 'say pile up troubles') L adds more weight to his tale of hardship by relating a calamitous fire incident that has destroyed his brother's house and belongings in Yaoundé. He thereby insinuates that he cannot even expect help from his own brother in the city. This indeed increases the pressure on M considerably due to one particular circumstance: one of

L's brothers had been very supportive of M when he was seeking out a living in Yaoundé.

If it had been that very brother who fell victim to the fire incident, M would have found himself with his back against the wall and could not have refused to help L in return for the prior support M received from his brother. This is the reason why M immediately asks for clarification of the brother's identity. As it turns out that it was another brother, M has no immediate obligation to assist and he gets away with signalling empathy, no matter how dramatically L elaborates on that story (*biébi-mà?à-mà* 'spoil-throw-finish'). Seeing that he is not getting anywhere with his complaint-request, L aborts his mission for the time being and turns to a light-hearted exchange of words with one of the daughters of the house.

(28) Macro structure of L's complaint-request about poverty	[1-33]
(A) 1st stage of complaint (<i>dìy-dzài</i> 'cry-say') about adverse life-conditions in Isu, framed as 'laying foundation' (<i>zà?à ídúw¹</i> 'weave seating frame')	[1-5]
(L) explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> 'open-show') 1: small income (day labourer)	[1-2]
(L) explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> 'open-show') 2: failed project (growing tomatoes)	[3-4]
(L) exclamation (<i>dìy</i> 'cry'): specification of sum needed to leave the village	[5]
(B) 2nd stage of complaint (<i>dìy-dzài</i> 'cry say') framed as aggravation (<i>dzài lólí 'tsá ùtswôd</i> 'say pile up troubles'):	[6-11]
(L) explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> 'open show') 1: second mouth to feed (girlfriend)	[6]
(L) explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> 'open show') 2: third mouth to feed (unborn child)	[9]
(L) exclamation 1 (<i>dìy</i> 'cry'): specification of time frame	[10]
(L) exclamation 2 (<i>dìy ngô?</i> 'cry heavy burden'):	
expression of despair	[11]
(C) inquiry (<i>báb-kô?</i> 'ask see'):	[12-14]

(L) inquiry (<i>báb-kô?</i> ‘ask see’): duration of M’s absence from the village	[12]
(M) answer (<i>bálí</i>): clarification that next visit will be soon	[13]
(L) agreement (<i>bémá</i>)	[14]
(D) diversion (<i>giání</i> ‘bend away’)	[15-23]
(M) statement (<i>dzài</i> ‘say’): visit to grandmother of eldest daughter (indirect request for accompaniment)	[15]
(L) agreement (<i>bémá</i>) to join M	[18]
(L) question (<i>báb</i>): M’s health (showing empathy)	[19-23]
(E) 3rd stage of complaint (<i>di̱y-dzài</i> ‘cry say’) framed as aggravation (<i>dzài lólí</i> ‘ <i>tsá ütswôd</i> ‘say pile up troubles’)	[24-33]
(L) explanation (<i>fwíy-dê</i> ‘open show’): fire incident affecting L’s brother in Yaoundé, insinuation: L cannot expect help from him	[24]
(M) inquiry (<i>báb-kô?</i> ‘ask see’): identification of L’s brother to find out if M is obliged to help	[25/27]
(L) clarification (<i>tié-dzài</i> ‘clear-say’) of L’s brother’s identity; no immediate obligation of support for M	[28-29]
(L) exacerbation (<i>biébi-mà?à-mà</i> ‘spoil-throw-finish’): threat to L’s brother’s life; utter destruction	[31-32]
(M) expression of empathy	[33]

This analysis of hierarchically organised illocutionary moves shows how the entire speech act remains ambivalent, uniting both expressive and directive intentions. In a series of three successive upgrading a complaint about adverse life conditions is aggravated by conventional and conversational implicatures which become ever more concrete, urgent and overwhelming, without allowing the addressee any room to doubt the real requestive intention behind it and forcing him into various evasive moves. At the same time the speaker seems to be very careful to stay off-record in an expressive mode and hammering home a request which never quite makes it to the on-record mode of realization.

4. Conclusion

In trying to reconcile Trosborg's definition of the English speech act concept *complain* with the Isu speech act concept *dìy-dzài* and its cognate Mèn counterpart *tʃi-tsàin*, one might lean more heavily on the notion of responsibility for repair of the complainable. This could be achieved by defining *dìy-dzài/tʃi-tsàin* as 'an illocutionary act in which the speaker (complainer) expresses his/her disapproval, negative feelings etc. towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (complainable)' (Trosborg 1995:311-312) and which is directed to the person who is held responsible for repair of the complainable, replacing Trosborg's adjunct 'for which he/she holds the hearer (complainee) responsible, either directly or indirectly'.

In some cultures this person, i.e. the complainee, might be identical with the causer of the complainable, in other cultures it is rather a mediator. But simply giving a definition such as this would miss a couple of points which are crucial for Isu and Mèn cultures of communication.

First, the speech act concepts expressed in *dìy-dzài/tʃi-tsàin* straddle the borderline between Searle's (1975:10ff) categories of expressive and directives in that they combine both the expression of the speaker's attitude and emotions (expressive) as well as the speaker's intention to cause the hearer to take a particular action (directive).

Second, the expressive function dominates over the directive function, which is reflected in the explication in

table (8.3) by representing the expressive function as the prominent illocutionary point in the dictum, while the directive function is represented in subordinate position as intention 2.

Third, a marked difference in social position of the interlocutors is crucial to the felicity conditions of *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin*. This emerges most clearly in comparison to the related speech act concepts *kwà/zò*. While *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin* refer to “complaining to a status superior”, *kwà/zò* refer to “complaining to a status inferior”.

Fourth, this difference in status relations is directly linked to another difference in felicity conditions: while the addressed inferior of *kwà/zò* is identical with the person held responsible for the grievance, this is not the case with the contrasting speech acts *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin*. Instead, these concepts build in indirection, i.e. the addressee is not identical with the person who is held directly responsible for causing the complainable. It is usually a person either superior by rank, office or age who is considered to have enough power and influence to set things straight and resolve the cause of the complaint, often acting as a mediator (Kießling, Neumann and Schröter 2011:89-90).

Thus, the constitutive semantic properties of the speech act concepts *dìy-dzài* (Isu) and *tfì-tsàin* (Mèn) with their specific constellations of expressive and directive notions, presuppositions and felicity conditions pertaining to the social relations of the interlocutors have some semantic overlap with both English concepts *complain* and *request*, while remaining incongruent with both.

On the discourse level speech acts turn out to be organized hierarchically, blending into each other on the macro-level. The example given in (28) represents a sequence of increasingly upgraded instances of the *dìy-dzài* type which are used to constitute a single request in off-record mode at macro-level by virtue of conventional and conversational implicature. It remains to be worked out in this case where precisely to draw the line between conventional and conversational implicature.

A theoretical and methodological spin-off in this context might be seen in the attempt to systematically group semantic components in NSM explications of speech acts under functional sub-headings such as dictum, presupposition, emotion and intention. These sub-headings could be viewed as organized in an internal hierarchy in which the dictum – capturing the prominent illocutionary point – ranges on top. Additional semantic notions such as presuppositions, emotions, intentions and expectations range in subordinate positions (whose order is not clear). They provide some room for accommodating a subordinate illocutionary point – as has been done in the case of the speech act concepts of *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin*– in order to account for their hybrid nature as expressive speech acts with directive undertones or intentions. Introducing a subordinate illocutionary point such as this might be a way of incorporating the notion of conventional implicature into the definition.

Thus, in the case of the expressive speech acts *dìy-dzài/tfì-tsàin*, the inclusion of a directive notion as intention 2 in the

explication (table 8.3) accounts for the tendency that they are typically used to address a request in an off-record mode.

Abbreviations

ADR	Addressee	NSM	Natural Semantic Metalanguage
AN	anaphoric marker	O	object
CF	clause focus	OF	out-of-focus marker
CFG	centrifugal	P1	immediate past
COMPL	complementizer	P2	hodiernal past
CPT	centripetal	P3	distant past
D1	proximal demonstrative	PLR	pluractional
D2	distal demonstrative	POT	potential
DEF	Definite	POSS	possessive
FOC	Focus	PREP	preposition
FTA	face threatening act	Q	interrogative particle
F1	hodiernal (near)QUOT future		quotative
F2	definite (distant)RES future		resumptive
IMM	immediacy marker	REL	relative
IMP	imperative	S	subject
INT	intensive	SJN	subjunctive
IPF	imperfective	SO	subordinative
IS	impersonal subject	V	verb
NEG	Negative	VN	verbal noun marker

Numbers refer to person when followed by sg (singular), Pl (plural), incl (inclusive), excl (exclusive) or log (logophoric). Otherwise, they refer to noun classes.

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ⁱⁱThe languages spoken by these communities are classified into different subgroups of the Ring group of Grassfields Bantu (Watters 2003) which forms one branch in Bantoid (Williamson and Blench 2000). Isu is a close sister to Aghem within West Ring, while Mën belongs to Central Ring.

ⁱⁱⁱAccordingly, two complementary techniques have been applied in data collection: (a) elicitation of vocabulary pertaining to the domain of speech, along the lines of Wierzbicka's 1987 study of English speech act verbs, combined with the exploration of contrastive usages in syntactic contexts for delimiting semantic ranges; (b) audiovisual recording of formal and informal speech events in authentic contexts, supplemented by interviews for exploring appropriateness and felicity conditions of the observed speech act performances plus additional elicitations for testing their potential for up-grading vs. down-grading.

^{iv}Unlike Trosborg, whose definition of "complaints" includes the condition that the complainer holds the complaineé directly or indirectly responsible for the complainable, we have broadened our scope of investigation to any speech act by which dissatisfaction with a state of affairs is conveyed, regardless of whether or not they include the concern about hearer's responsibility for the complainable.

^vThe explications of the semantic components take recourse to semantic primes, "i.e. elementary conceptual building blocks, which are not defined themselves" (Wierzbicka 1987:31) as well as semantic molecules, i.e. "non-primitive meanings (hence, ultimately decomposable

into semantic primes) that can function as units in the semantic structure of other, yet more complex words.” (Goddard 2010:124). We have made use of the so-called ‘Metalexicon’ given in Wierzbicka (1987:386/387) in order to achieve readability in our explications and tables. Semantic components which are not relevant in defining a given lexicalization are marked by three hyphens, while empty fields reflect uncertainty about the extent to which the component plays a role in defining the act.

^{vi}Given the premise that different sets of (closely related) speech acts are made up of different sets of semantic components, pertaining uniquely to them, we concede that our specifications/labels of semantic components are not generally applicable to all speech act lexicalizations of a given language. They do, however, serve to highlight crucial felicity conditions and distinctions in our comparison of a restricted set of Isu and Mèn speech acts.

^{vii}Names have been anonymised.

^{viii}The term is derived from a handicraft source domain by metaphorical extension of the basic meaning ‘weave a seating frame’

APPENDIX I: MICROSTRUCTURE OF L’S COMPLAINT TO M

superordinate illocution (head act)	No	Sp.	subordinate illocutionary moves and performer
(A) complaint (<i>dìy-dzài</i> ‘cry-say’) [1-5] Stage 1: dire conditions for making a living in the village	1-2	L	<i>zà?à ídúw</i> ⁱ ‘lay foundation’ (< weave seating frame) performed by explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> ‘open-show’) intention (a) introduce and justify indirect request in [5] (b) put forward the 1st effort he made to alleviate his poverty [working as day labourer] upgrading by (a) diminutive in ‘job’ and ‘house’ (making clear that it’s only a small source of income) (b) backboy (making clear that it’s not a steady income)

(B) complaint (<i>dīy-dzài</i> ‘cry-say’) [6-11] Stage 2: weight of responsibility for pregnant girlfriend and unborn child	3-4	L	<i>zà?à ídúw</i>⁴ ‘lay foundation’ (< weave seating frame) performed by explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> ‘open show’) intention: (a) continue justification of indirect request in [5] (b) put forward the 2nd effort he made to alleviate his poverty [growing tomatoes] upgrading by (a) <i>tsó</i> intensifier (to demonstrate that he really made an effort [in vain]) (b) <i>ndzìm</i> ‘truly’ (to point out that conditions for growing vegetables are really bad in Isu)
	5	L	<i>bwó? káwó</i> ‘plead’ (< clasp hand) performed by exclamation (<i>dīy</i> ‘cry’) intention: (a) specify his need [a contribution to the sum of 200.000 francs] (b) attract pity (<i>zíní muó⁴lí kiy kwó? áyú á zónghè wè</i> ‘make pity climb people on his behalf’) upgrading by (a) <i>mân</i> ‘only, just’ (to signal urgency) (b) specification of amount of money (c) /‘tsut’ (possibly to enhance his expression of desire to flee the village)
	6	L	<i>dzài lúli</i> ‘<i>tsó</i> útswôd’ ‘aggravate’ (< say pile up troubles) performed by explanation (<i>fwíy-dè</i> ‘open-show’) intention: (a) add weight to his tale of hardship (b) demonstrate that motivation for request is not unreasonable greediness but responsibility upgrading by (a) introduction of a 2nd mouth to feed [girlfriend, in the middle of exams] (<i>sò?ò</i> ‘also, on top’) (b) insinuating that exams cost money (c) specification of time (<i>nià</i> ‘now’) adds urgency
	7	M	<i>báb</i> ‘ask’

			intention (a) get information about type of exams the girlfriend is engaged in (b) keep the exchange factual, wilfully ignoring the subtext
	8	L	<i>bémá</i> ‘agree’
	9	L	<i>dzài lólí</i> ‘<i>tsá</i> ùtswôd ‘aggravate’ (< say pile up troubles) performed by explanation (<i>fwíy-dê</i> ‘open-show’) intention: lend urgency to the issue (<i>zìbì-dzài</i> ‘fix-say’) upgrading by (a) introduction of a 3rd mouth to feed [unborn baby] (b) pointing out that childbirth is imminent (<i>‘kə</i> ìvăn ‘only one week’ / <i>twámí</i> ‘byí ‘immediately give birth’) (c) clarifying (àn dá ‘mínsé)
	10	L	<i>bwó? káwó</i> ‘plead’ (< clasp hand)performed by exclamation (<i>dìy</i> ‘cry’) intention: (a) clarify until when he needs the money (b) attract pity (<i>zígí mós’lí káy kwó? áyú á zóhà wè</i> ‘make pity climb people on his behalf’) upgrading by (a) expression of desperation (exclamation <i>hǎaí’</i>) (b) setting a timeframe (‘by September’) (c) use of predicative focus (<i>à dǎ nè</i>) emphasises his wish to have some means
	11	L	<i>dìy ngò?</i> ‘lament’ (< ‘cry heavy burden’)performed by statement (<i>dzài</i>) intention (a) attract pity (<i>zígí mós’lí káy kwó? áyú á zóhà wè</i> ‘make pity climb people on his behalf’) (b) put pressure (<i>kiámí</i>) on M upgrading by (a) expression of desperation (<i>kò? wài</i> ‘not ever’) (b) <i>má k’ú</i> ‘I know’ dramatises and emphasises the statement of desperation

(C)inquiry (<i>báb-kôʔ</i> ‘ask-see’) [12-14]	12	L	<i>bwóʔ káwóʔ</i> ‘plead’ (< ‘clasp hand’) performed by question (<i>báb</i>) intention (a) find out (<i>báb-kôʔ</i> ‘ask-see’) about the effectiveness of his complaint-request (b) elicit a pre-commitment and thereby (c) minimize M’s options to evade (<i>fí-ná</i> ‘hold-keep [in one’s grip]’) upgrading by (a) signalling expectation (b) pushing M for a precise answer
	13	M	<i>báli</i> (answer) performed by statement (<i>dzài</i> ‘say’) intention: defer commitment by signalling that he will still be around [exit strategy part 1] while being careful not to reveal any willingness to comply with L’s request
	14	L	<i>bémá</i> ‘agree’ with postponement
(D)diversion <i>giání</i> ‘bend away’ [15-23]	15	M	<i>giání</i> ‘veer off’ (> ‘bend away’) performed by statement (<i>dzài</i> ‘say’) intention: (a) evade (<i>né-ʔfyí</i> ‘slide-exit’) L’s increasingly cornering requests [exit strategy part 2] (b) divert attention to own agenda [off-record request that L accompany him to grandmother’s house]
	16	L	<i>báb</i> ‘ask’ if visit to grandmother is immediate
	17	M	<i>bémá</i> ‘agree’: confirm
	18	L	<i>bémá</i> ‘agree’ to accompany M to grandmother’s house
	19-23		<i>báb</i> ‘ask’ [switch to English] about M’s health, showing empathy
(E). complaint (<i>díy-dzài</i> ‘cry-say’) [24-34] Stage 3: Calamity that has befallen junior brother	24	L	<i>dzài lólí ʔtsá ʔtswôd</i> ‘aggravate’ (< say pile up troubles) performed by explanation (<i>fwíy-dê</i> ‘open show’)[switch to English] intention: (a) put forward a 3rd reason to justify his request (b) insinuate (<i>sóŋ dzài kóná</i> ‘guess say along’) that he cannot even expect help from his own brother

			upgrading by switch to English (a) screen off the dialogue from surrounding conversation, excluding others present (b) add importance to the content by invoking formality
25	M		<i>báb-kô?</i> ‘ask-see’: identity of L’s brother intention: (a) find out which of L’s brother has had the misfortune and thereby (b) find out if he is obliged to help
26	L		<i>dzài fúri</i> ‘repeat’ (< say again): state family relation
27	M		<i>báb-kô?</i> ‘ask-see’ [see 25]: seek confirmation of name of L’s brother
28-29	L		<i>tié dzài</i> ‘clarify’ (< clear-say): specify name / identity of brother correctly
30	M		<i>bémá</i> ‘agree’
31-32	L		<i>biebí-mà?à-mà</i> ‘spoil-throw-finish’ (< exacerbate) performed by statement (<i>dzài</i> ‘say’) intention: (a) upgrade weight of issue (<i>zíbí-dzài</i> ‘fix-say’) (b) manipulate M (<i>sè ndà?i</i> ‘drag along’) upgrading by (a) invoking threat to life for the brother [dramatisation] (b) stating complete destruction of all the brother’s belongings
33	M		express empathy performed by exclamations (<i>dìy</i> ‘cry’) intention: (a) bring the series of uncomfortable complaint-requests to an end (b) wriggle out (<i>né-’fyí</i> ‘slide-exit’) of any commitment

APPENDIX II: FULL TRANSCRIPT OF L’S COMPLAINT TO M

001 (L)

wò	kòʔà,	ɣè	yîy	fóná	wò	ɣwò
	niáʔ	yíyʔ,				
2sg	see	S1pl.excl	like.this	return.from.bush	CPT	CF
	SO-now		like.this			
ɣè	mâ	zúʔ	nîy	dʒɔ́b fã	líy	fíy áʔn-í-
zîjî	ndáw fã					
S1pl.excl	P1	SO: go	SO: take	job	19	some 19-D2 to-VN-
make	little.house					
wàkʰú.						

19child.Fulani

You see, we like this are coming back now like this, we went to take a little job to build an Akhu man's hut.

002 (L)

má	niâ	fàʔà	bàkbôí	ádʒámà	wù,	ɣè	mâ
	zù	káʔ	ná	tsá	ɣwô	áʔn-í-	
mài	ká	á	móndèy.				
S1sg	SO:now	work	backboy	behind	person	S1pl.excl	P1
	go	start	keep	INT	SO:CF	PREP-VN-	
finishup	PREP	Monday					

I am now working like a backboy (supplier of labour) behind a main worker; we went to start keep to finish on Monday.

003 (L)

má	ká	mwàm	kòʔ	tsá	tótòmât	lást	yîâ
S1sg	P3	touch	see	TERM	13-tomato	last	year
má	ndzàm	kòʔ	tsá	nà	tòmát	tìy	dzʷâ
	wài	fã	íʔnáʔ.				

S1sg truly see INT COMPL tomato 13-
OF SO:be.good NEG here N2-country

I tried to plant tomatoes last year, I truly saw that tomatoes don't grow well here in the village.

004 (L)

<i>má</i>	<i>díy</i>	<i>ʰndámí</i>	<i>ní</i>	<i>yâ</i>	<i>ùwéʰ</i>	<i>yâʰ</i>	<i>íwé</i>
	<i>yíy</i>	<i>bê</i>	<i>niâʰ</i>	<i>kíʰzíní</i>	<i>tsá...</i>		
S1sg	want	SO:increase	enter	SO:CFG	N2-body	as	rain
	5-OF	SO:come	SO:now		like.this		

yíyʰ, má

S1sg F1makeIMM

I want to increase my effort as rain is coming now like this, I will make...

005 (L)

<i>báʰ</i>	<i>tsúk</i>	<i>fâ</i>	<i>líy</i>	<i>f-</i>			
<i>íy</i>	<i>má</i>	<i>mânjkôʰ</i>	<i>tsáʰ</i>	<i>ʃiá</i>	<i>k-íy</i>	<i>áʰná-</i>	
<i>wó</i>	<i>táʰ</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>dâ</i>	<i>tú</i>	<i>hándrád</i>	<i>táusèn</i>	<i>ʃ^{vii}</i>
if	day	19	some	19-D2	S1sg	SO:just	SO:see
	thing	7-OF		PREP-hand	like	IS	be
	two	hundred	thousand		<tsut>		

má kí zâ túw tsá fâ íʰnáʰ yíʰ!

S1sg F1 fly escape IMM here N2-country like.this

If only one day I saw something in my hand like two hundred thousand (francs) <tsw> I would immediately flee this village here!

006 (L)

<i>àn</i>	<i>íkà</i>	<i>w-ám</i>	<i>ʰwó</i>	<i>ù</i>	<i>kʰú</i>	<i>áʰn-í-</i>
<i>twà</i>	<i>sòʔò</i>	<i>nià.</i>				
and	Ika	1-1sg.poss	1-D1	S3sg	have	PREP-VN-
						write also now

And my girlfriend also has to write (exams) now.

007 (M)

dʒi *si* *iʔ*

G C Eʔ

General Certificate of Education?

008 (L)

m̃h.

yes

Yes.

009 (L)

àn ù dā úniâ, àn dá 'mínsé, bá' ù twà
 tsá 'náníy, bá' ù twà tsá 'náníy,
and S3sg be belly and that means if S3sg write
 INT SUBORD if S3sg write INT SUBORD
sòm táim ù kì jìà tsá 'ká ìvân á-
yíy' ù twámí 'byí
maybe S3sg F1 give INT only week like.this
 S3sg immediately SO:give.birth

And she is pregnant, and that means that, when she writes (the exams), when she writes, maybe she will have only a week before she gives birth.

010 (L)

má gwúŋà zì k-ám k-
íy nà sèptémbà á-yíy'
S1sg pray God 7-1sg.poss 7-D2 COMPL
September like.this
bá' à dǎ nà fíá k-íy má 'jí miá
 á'ná-wó hǎíí'
if SI be COMPL thing 7-OF P1.foc SO:enter NS1sg
 PREP-hand < excl. >

I pray to my God that by September some means should have come into my hands!

011 (L)

mà k'hú zzìzzí fā dzóŋà f-
ìy nîy kwái kò? wài miá!
S1sg know short.story 19 SO:be.good 19-OF F2
 encounter neverNEG NS1sg

I know that nothing good will ²²⁸ever happen to me!

012 (L)

á-

bá⁺ wò zù níá⁺ wò... wò... wò kì ηgé zè
díó?ó ηwô

if 2sg go SO:now 2sg... 2sg... 2sg F1 a.lot go
stay SO:CF

bífó wò kâmbú?

before 2sg SO:again SO:come

If you leave now, you... you... will you stay away for long before
you return?

013 (M)

nó⁺ má zéjé 'ká iván.

no S1sg make only week

No, I'll be gone for only a week.

014 (L)

ókě.

Okay

Okay.

015(M)

màmí w-

ò dzìy má bú nîy dân tsâ
màntsómbì.

mother 1-D1 say S1sg SO:come SO:take SO:cross
SO:IMM soft.groundnuts

This mother says I should come over and take some groundnuts.

016 (L)

niâ ò?

SO: now or

Now, or...?

017 (M)

nh.

Yes.

Yes.

018 (L)

ókě

Okay

Okay.

019 (L)

I have not even aks your leg, how is it?

I didn't even ask about your leg, how is it?

020 (M)

nó, it is improving.

Well, it's improving.

021 (L)

ókě

Okay.

022 (M)

It has not come back to its real position.

It has not come back to its full health.

023 (L)

ókě

Okay.

[...]

024 (L)

My junior brother's house got burned in Yaounde, you heard of it?

025 (M)

Who?

026 (L)

The junior brother.

027 (M)

tìy?

Tiy?

028 (L)

nô, tám

No, Tem.

029 (L)

The small man who had O-levels last year.

030 (M)

m̃h̃m̃

I see.

031 (L)

They called me one day around one pm like that that the house is ablaze and they knocked the door but he could not come out through the door, he came out through the window, he was sleeping inside.

032(L)

Everything got burnt.

033 (M)

hôi!hâi!

Goodness!

Oh, no!

The language of symbols and African communication: the case of Ngemba

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Background of the study

The starting point is the loss of our grandfather. No sooner as he died, we were deprived of our hair once to the village. Although at the age of six we could not understand such an act, the shaved head of our brothers and cousins were comforting us. Later on, we realized that it was a common practice in the Grassfields, which led us to deeply examine not only this practice but also all those that were taking place during burial and many other ceremonies.

It appears that all these practices are symbols, signs of recognition through which the entire community expresses itself and transmits its beliefs, customs and aspirations. It is unfortunate that a good number of people, especially young people, are not always conscious and able to decode these symbols, to the pity of cultural preservation. Thus, it is following this observation that we get the idea to list these symbols and their usages in order to make them available.

Using the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1971) according to which the context is essential for an effective communication and language competence; we decided to interpret any sign or symbol likely to carry a meaning in a community called *ngəmbà*. This community is part of the Bamileke group in Cameroon also called 'Grassfield,' where socio-cultural practices are very similar. The methods used were interviews, documents and observation and we came out with the following results:

Function 1 of symbols: The depiction of the memory of an important event.

Figure 9.1. Chiefs' sculpture



Photo 1: Sculpture representing the genealogy of chiefs, social hierarchy and organization in the ngembà community

The analysis of the symbols allows to trace the historical background and the cosmogonies of people of the Grass field area and thus, of the *ngembà*. As a matter of fact, there are several signs or symbols for understanding the *ngembà* worldview, and how they think the world. The sculpture (Photo 1) for instance presents the genealogy of the chiefs and the organization of the chiefdom; some objects in their turn represent the various victories or defeats, which the *ngembà* were once faced in tribal wars.

Figure 9.2. The horse's tale (ssá)



Photo 2: Horse's tail laying over the 'ndop', a traditional cloth

Always held at funerals, the basics are available, which show that the symbolism of the horse's tail in the Cameroonian Grassfields area was born around the sixteenth century as a result of punitive raids of cavalry among Fulani warriors in the Bamoun community. This community was under the attack of Fulani from the North and North-East of their territory. The Fulani, avid riders, were owners of horses, which was very strange to Bamoun, who had never seen an animal carrying a man and able to run at disconcerting speeds. Reportedly, the Bamoun considered the horse as supernatural animal carrying extraordinary individuals. However, one day, a bold man, an archer, armed with courage after the massacre of his family by these strange riders, decided to attack the enemy head on.

In an ambush he tripped over a horse, killed the rider and cut the tail of the beast. When he went to the royal palace, the king

was very amazed for he saw something unbelievable: The courageous Bamoun was holding the rider's head and the tail of the Fulani horse he had just cut off. The king then organized a big party to celebrate the victory over the enemy, waving the horse's tail, as a trophy. Could the animal and the rider previously considered supernatural and invincible really be defeated? The horse's tail was the irrefutable proof! Since then, the Bamileke country decided to make the horse's tail a *symbol of victory*: victory over the enemy, victory over despair, victory over death. The symbol of victory is now held up to any festive occasion of triumph dances of secret societies, mourning, funerals, etc. The horse's tail has come a long way already, and intends to remain in the cosmogony of Grassfields and sociology for a long time.

'Ssa' symbolizes not only victory but also honor and prestige in the Grass field area. Only people having honorific titles are allowed to carry it.

Function 2 of symbols: The depiction of beliefs

Figure 9.3. Ndesi (house of skulls)



Photo 3: "Ndesi" or shrine where sacrifices are performed

In traditional Bamileke religion, the practice of sacrifice plays an important role. In this religion, there are “priests” *Kamsi*, sacrifices (animals, salt, oil etc.), “altars” *shuepsi*, and “shrines” *Ndesi*. The sacrifice that the priest offers is addressed to a god called *si*. Sacrifices aim either at appeasing the wrath of their ancestors, or at bringing protection, healing, prosperity, to living beings: humans, animals and plants.

According to Goua (2008), the Bamileke belief system is a process of gradual transition for animism to unitarianism. Unitarianism is a form of monotheism, which believes in an infinite god, who exists only in one person *si*. Animism is a belief involving the existence of personal gods and spirits as well as of impersonal forces.

Figure 9.4. The human skull



Photo 4: Human skull used for sacrifices

The bone of human being plays an important role in the Bamileke belief system. It is spiritually viewed as a way of getting in touch with the dead person. According to Goua (2008), the human skull, because of its correspondence with the upper parts of the being that is, the soul, the conscience, and the spirit is an excellent way to get in touch with the spiritual soul of a deceased. In fact, some years after the death of a memorable individual, his

skull is removed and kept in the shrine by the priest where many rituals are performed on it. Because of these rituals, the spiritual contact produced may be used to make any demand, action or prayer of intercession for us with, the creator. Only the skull is of importance because it is the seat of verbal expression.

A. Function 3 of symbols: The depiction of customs

Figure 9.5. The chief / king / lion (*năcămà*)



Photo 5: Picture of a Bamileke chief on his throne

The king is the symbol of everything that contributes to the happiness of his people. Considering his power (even if he does not have talents or abilities) he functions as a channel between people he governs and God who is above all powers. Kings are generally referred to *năcămà*, “lion” or to *mbəlon*,’ *Nta’ sunsø* “elephant tusk,” which are totemic elements with which they are identified.

Before the arrival of the Western civilization, any action was revolving around the kingdom, the place that embodies the divine power, authority, the necessary legislation for peace and order and all what is needed by everybody in the community to live well. The Royal palace is the capital of the traditional unity. The king who embodies it has always been the main holder of powers, the most appropriate person to find a solution to any given problem.

It is the king who acts as the supreme judge in his community. His duty is to be constantly available to his community. He has to be prompt to discern the needs of his people, to supervise them and protect them with his special powers. Being seen as an image of God's kingdom among men, he is the repository of knowledge, customs and power. As the embodiment of God, he connects people to God; hence his name *Sibefo* "God is the king" or *Sipefo* "God is king".

Figure 9.6. The yellow sauce (*cù'nà'*)



Photo 6: Picture of an honorific meal

The yellow sauce is an honorific meal in the Grassland country hence making part of many rituals and traditional ceremonies. Formerly, this sauce was exclusively reserved to notables. It contains palm oil and ingredients full of vitamins. Apart from religious ceremonies, it is a meal cooked by the family of the bridegroom to receive the bride's family and the guests. Although everyone may nowadays eat it, it has remained the symbol of respect and a prestigious meal.

Figure 9.7. The seat (*kwɔ'*)



Photo 7: Sculpture representing a Bamileke woman on a chair with three legs.

In the *ngambà* community, the *kwɔ'* seat is a sacred item because it is a symbol of power. It carries all the energy and power of its owner. In a family, men, women and children do not usually share the same seats. People should therefore be careful, because bad people use it generally to reach their enemies. Chiefs always move with their seat. An individual is not authorized to sit on the seat of another unless he/she is the heir.

But in order to be allowed to sit on the seat, the heir must undergo an initiation that will protect him and give him all the powers of his predecessor. According to the rank of the owner, we can have chairs with one leg, with two legs, with three legs or with four legs. It is important to note that generally, prohibitions related to the *kwɔ* "seat" in the *ngambà* community apply also to the bed.

Figure 9.8. The drum (ntó)



Photo 8: The drum, an instrument of communication

Then *tó* drum is used to announce news and to mobilize people: bereavement, arrival of a newcomer, the presence of a thief in the village, to give life to events: religious festivals and especially to communicate with parents, friends, or ancestors.

Be it a 'phone drum' or a 'telegraph drum,' by analogy with the telephone or telegraph, the calling drum is primarily a means of communication in Africa (Carrington 1976). There is no doubt that the drum is the ancestor the modern techniques of communication. Voyenne (1962) is clear when he declares that: 'Among all the ancestral means of communication, the African drum is the one that heralds the most the press, because the messages that it transmits are propagating simultaneously in several directions. It provides information on events (large and

small) of the community expresses its joys and sorrows, breaks the monotony of everyday life.'

Figure 9.9. Kola (*nəphyə*)



Photo 9: Varieties of kola nuts

Kola appears in the *ngəmbà* community as the seal of a profound friendship or alliance. Thus, it is almost impossible to imagine a wedding or a friendly game without kola. In case the nuts give four pieces when shared, this symbolizes fortune, but if it gives three parts, is not important to share it, because number three does not symbolize fortune in this particular context. In any case, never share kola when its quarters are above the number of guests. While sharing, never let people serve on the palm of the hand for they can take away the blessings through the fingerprints.

Figure 9.10. The tree of peace (*fətkəŋ*)



Photo 10: Pieces of the tree of peace held in a traditional ceremony

The name of the tree of peace (*fətkəŋ*) indicates it is a plant that symbolizes serenity, calm and peace; it is a peace not only with others but also with ancestors and gods. The tree of peace marks the end of an inter-family or inter-clan conflict. Female priests and mothers of twins usually take a branch of this plant to walk out; it is also hung on doors and gates to prevent fairies from entering homes and to prevent evil actions. Insiders at the *Ku'ŋgaŋ*, an influent secret society, use it finally for purification.

Figure 9.11. The Creeping grass (*gwəŋhò*)



Photo 11: Picture of the branches and leaves of the *gwəŋhò*

“Creeping grass”, the *gwəŋhò*, is the symbol of prosperity and immortality, this is why we put it on the breast of the girl during the wedding ceremony to wish her fertility, that her household always goes forward and that her posterity expands over generations.

Figure 9.12. The *fəfyə*



Photo 12: Picture of *fəfyə* on the ground

The *fəfyə* is a multiple virtues plant in the *ngəmbà* community. Besides the fact that it can heal many physical diseases; it is also endowed with a lot of supernatural powers. Used during ritual ceremonies like marriages and the feast of the twins, it is the symbol of fertility and protection. It makes insiders of the *Nyang-nyang* (a traditional ritual performed by teenagers) invincible, and able to withstand any kind of physical or spiritual attacks: Disease, poison night, and vampirism.

Figure 9.13. The sun (*nùm*)



Photo 13: Picture of the sunset

Star of justice, the sun acts as a time indicator. In order to know the time; the *ngambà* refers to the sun, so that the question “What time is it?” is literally translated by “How many sun is it?” *Wǎnùmsu?* “It is 6 o’clock”. *Nùmtək* “six sun”. The sun represents the eye of God who always tells the truth; that is why the sun is also considered as the symbol of justice.

Figure 9.14. The moon (*mûhwó*)



Photo 14: Picture of the quarter moon

The moon is also a time indicator in the *ngambà*. It refers to the “months”. It also illuminates the society and prevents evil spirits; that is why when it shines, traditional rituals and dances are performed.

In the dry season when the moon is full, the community gathers around a great fire, women are performing traditional dances to call for the rain, and children listen to tales told by patriarchs. From this view, the moon can also be perceived as the symbol of joy and happiness.

2. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the aim of this study was to give the meaning of symbols, which are part of African communication. Without

claiming to have made an exhaustive list of symbols, we can say that symbols are part of everyday life in the *ngambà* community. Be it during everyday conversation or special events, symbols remain omnipresent because they embody the meaning of realities and clearly put in evidence the underlying meaning of words.

Linguistically, the knowledge of African symbols would allow speakers to acquire a better competence and performance in their own languages. Using these symbols should also be of a major contribution in the field of translation is the sense that symbols take into account the context and realities would therefore be rendered in their appropriate way.

Moreover, the study of these symbols in academia could be an outstanding contribution to medicine in the sense that plants such as *fəfyə* and *gwɔŋhò* used in traditional ceremonies as a symbolic gesture against all kinds of assault, should be carefully and scientifically analyzed in laboratory.

The symbolism of the 'drum,' the 'sun' and the 'moon' has been determinant in the development of technology, respectively through the invention of the telephone and the clock.

Speaking of the incidence of symbols in the educational system, symbols inform, unveil taboos, foster cultural identity and participate thus to social integration.

It is therefore important to learn African symbols because they depict the wisdom, the worldview, the values, and the belief system of African languages.

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Termes d'adresse et langues camerounaises dans les marchés de Yaoundé

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Introduction

La communication verbale est un processus d'échanges dans lequel des individus véhiculent des messages oralement. Elle ne se limite pas à une transmission ou un échange d'informations car elle prend également en compte les relations interpersonnelles existant entre les locuteurs. Étant donné que la plupart des actes de parole sont des processus interpersonnels, pour communiquer efficacement, l'on ne doit pas simplement corriger la langue du point de vue de sa forme, mais l'on doit aussi considérer les auditeurs. Dans la communication interpersonnelle, l'étiquette est très importante.

D'ailleurs, (Heller 1996 : 22) écrit que c'est dans l'interaction que nous définissons nos rapports les uns avec les autres, les frontières qui nous regroupent et qui nous séparent, et les rapports de pouvoir que nous exerçons et subissons'. Ainsi, pour être un communicateur efficace, l'on doit parler de manière à ne pas offenser le récepteur. C'est pourquoi dans la communication sociale, (Foley 1997) parle du concept de politesse qu'il définit comme 'a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure that everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction.'

Cette notion construit la majeure partie des conversations et contribue en grande partie à maintenir des relations interpersonnelles harmonieuses. Cependant, notons qu'avant de rentrer dans le vif d'un échange, il existe diverses façons d'aborder la personne avec laquelle l'on souhaite s'entretenir. Parmi ces tactiques d'approche, nous avons les termes d'adresse que Li (2006) définit comme 'words and phrases used as the

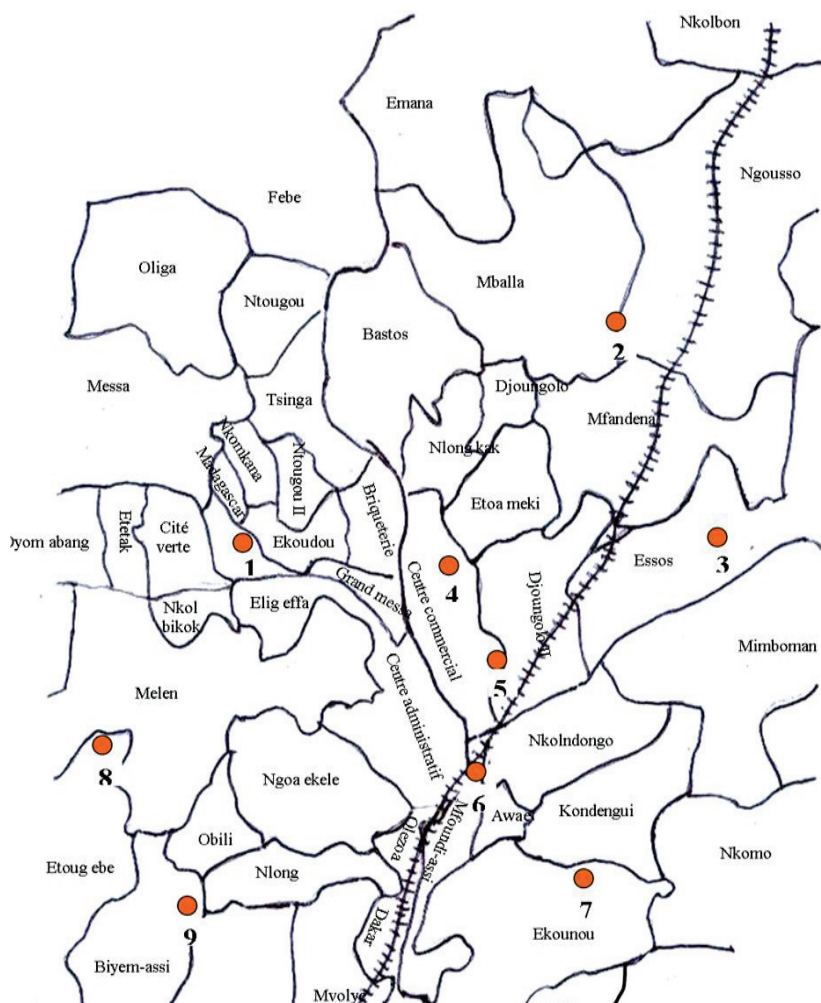
name or symbol of a person (...) words and phrases used for addressing or referring to his/her collocutor.' Le terme d'adresse permet d'entamer une conversation et influence généralement la suite de celle-ci.

Le présent article s'intitule 'termes d'adresse et langues camerounaises dans les marchés de Yaoundé.' Il vise à analyser divers termes d'adresse en montrant leur impact dans la recherche de cohésion sociale et à souligner l'insertion sociale à travers la prédominance de l'*éwondo* dans des marchés Yaoundé.

Les problèmes qui émergent ici sont d'une part celui des errements communicationnels dénotés dans les conversations, et d'autre part celui de la tolérance culturelle. Ceci est notamment dû au fait que plusieurs personnes, particulièrement les jeunes, ne respectent guère le système social. Pour éviter des écarts susceptibles de détruire ou de perturber une bonne communication entre les vendeurs et les clients, nous nous proposons d'examiner les différentes manifestations linguistiques de la politesse dans les marchés de Yaoundé. Ainsi nous pourrions les mettre à jour pour une meilleure qualité des interactions sociales dans ces lieux par excellence de commerce et d'échanges.

Le commerce est une activité d'une importance notable dans un pays. Les commerçants étant de puissants acteurs de l'économie, ils ne peuvent pas être ignorés car la société est bâtie à leur image. Nous voulons savoir si les commerçants et les clients ont un souci de respect par l'emploi des termes d'adresse adéquats. Leurs actes de parole nous permettront également de scruter le degré d'usage de l'*éwondo* dans la ville d'origine de ce parler camerounais. D'où la question 'quelle est la contribution réelle des vendeurs dans la conservation et la transmission des valeurs humaines que sont la politesse et le relativisme culturel ?'

Figure 10.1.i: Carte de localisation des marchés étudiés



Cadre théorique

Dans un sens large, la communication peut être définie comme toute opération d'échange ou de transfert d'informations entre les individus. Il convient toutefois de noter que la communication est un phénomène complexe, car son efficacité implique divers facteurs. Pour montrer sa complexité, (Jakobson

1960) établit un schéma mettant en exergue 6 paramètres qui déterminent toute communication linguistique se voulant effective.

La langue étant sans conteste une preuve de l'identité culturelle de tout individu, il est important de se référer aux connaissances culturelles ou aux normes culturelles d'une communauté pour expliquer l'utilisation de certaines expressions linguistiques dans les interactions verbales. Puisque l'ethnographie de la communication est une discipline théorique fondée sur l'observation des faits de langue dans leur contexte normal, notre étude focalisée sur les termes d'adresse gagne à s'inspirer des théories de cette dernière. (Saville-Troike 1989: 11) écrit :

The ethnography of communication is concerned with discovering regularities in language use, but while sociolinguists focus on variability in pronunciation and grammatical form, ethnographers are concerned with how communicative units are organized and how these patterns interrelate in a systematic way and derive meaning from other aspects of culture.

Notre travail est basé sur d'autres modèles, en particulier le modèle SPEAKING de Hymes et la théorie interactionnelle de Brown et Levinson. Hymes, cité par Littlejohn et (Foss 2005 : 312), suggère que 'cultures communicate in different ways, but all forms of communication require a shared code, communicators who know and use the code, a channel, a setting, a message form, a topic, and an event created by transmission of the message'. Dans son modèle Hymes englobe les facteurs suivants: S- *Setting and scene*; P- *Participants* ; E- *Ends*; A- *Act Sequence*; K- *Key*; I- *Instrumentalities*; N-*Norms* et G-*Genre*. Pour Brown et Levinson, auteurs de la théorie interactionnelle (1978), dans une interaction verbale, tout acte est un FTA (Acte Potentiellement Menaçant de la *face*). Les divers acteurs de tout dialogue doivent ainsi s'assurer de ne pas porter atteinte à la *face* des autres. Par conséquent, les individus peuvent convenablement converser si certains principes de base de la

politesse sont respectés. La politesse accomplit ainsi une fonction sociale primordiale dans l'équilibre de la communauté.

Dans chaque interaction verbale, les interlocuteurs font l'effort de ne pas s'offenser mutuellement, le souci premier est de maintenir les faces, d'où l'explication brown levinsonienne suivante (1978 : 66) : 'In general, people cooperate « and assume each other's cooperation » in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face.'

Après l'observation des marchands et des clients sur les marchés de Yaoundé, nous avons noté que des deux côtés, il y a une variété de référents, qui pour la majorité, sont teintés de flatterie, parce que le destinataire se prépare à la négociation et souhaite obtenir la chose convoitée en encensant le destinataire. Dans la même optique, l'*éwondo* est régulièrement utilisé puisqu'étant le parler originel de la ville, et sûrement celui de la majorité des commerçants et des clients desdits marchés.

Méthodologie et analyse des données

Avant de présenter notre procédé d'analyse des données collectées, nous exposons brièvement le site d'investigation, l'échantillonnage et la méthode de collecte des données.

Présentation du site

Dans le cadre du présent travail, nous étudions les termes d'adresse dans dix (10) marchés représentatifs des habitudes des commerçants et des clients de Yaoundé. Leur célébrité et leur taille nous ont amenée à choisir le marché central et les marchés Biyem-Assi, Ekounou, Elig-Edzoa, Essos, Melen, Mendong, Mfoundi, Mokolo et Mvog-Mbi. Carte en annexe 1.

Échantillon

Notre population cible est composée de commerçants et de clients des marchés de Yaoundé. Elle tient compte de toutes les catégories de personnes agissant dans ces marchés, puisque nous n'avons exclu aucun sexe, aucune ne tranche d'âge, aucune ethnie, aucune religion. Notre échantillon est composé de six cent (600) personnes dont cinq cent (500) commerçants et cent

(100) clients. Nous les avons réparties dans des tableaux selon certaines variables sociales que sont l'âge, le sexe et le statut matrimonial.

Échantillonnage des vendeurs

Nous les avons répartis selon l'âge, le sexe et le statut matrimonial.

	Âge	Nom.	Sexe	Nom.	Statut matrimonial	Nom.
	[15-35]	185	Femmes	250	Mariés	280
	[35-55]	195	Hommes	250	Célibataires	220
	[55-75]	120				
Total		500		500		500

Table 10.1 : Échantillonnage des vendeurs

Échantillonnage des clients

Dans ce tableau, les clients étudiés sont également répartis selon l'âge et le sexe.

	Âge	Nom.	Sexe	Nom.
	[15-35]	48	Femmes	66
	[35-55]	38	Hommes	34
	[55-75]	14		
Total		100		100

Table 10.2 : Échantillonnage des clients

Il est maintenant question de présenter la procédure de collecte des données.

Recueil des données

Pour la présente étude, la récolte des données a été faite en deux (2) phases. La première concernait exclusivement l'étude des clients. Ici, nous avons eu recours à l'entretien semi-directif et à l'introspection. La deuxième phase se rapportait à l'étude des marchands, et à ce niveau nous nous sommes appuyées sur l'entretien semi-directif, l'observation directe et l'observation participante pour recueillir nos données. Après les avoir récoltées, elles ont été analysées.

Analyse des données

Les données collectées ont été analysées selon le sexe (femme / homme), les tranches d'âge (15-30 ans, 35-50 ans et plus de 55 ans) et le statut matrimonial (célibataire / marié). Nous avons utilisé le logiciel Microsoft Office Excel pour procéder aux calculs statistiques.

Résultats

D'une part nous analysons les termes d'adresse, d'autre part nous nous focalisons sur l'utilisation de l'éwondo dans l'usage desdits termes.

A. Termes d'adresse

Nous avons répertorié une centaine de termes d'adresse.

B. Termes d'adresse en langues officielles et en camfranglais

Nous avons résumé les résultats obtenus en ne soulignant que le groupe utilisant le plus chaque terme, le pourcentage d'utilisation dans ledit groupe et le récepteur du terme. Les termes en camfranglais seront en italique pour préciser cette origine.

Termes d'adresse	Émetteurs	Récepteurs	Pourcentages
Termes de parenté			
beau-fils	vendeuses célibataires	clients adultes	4,8%
beau-père	vendeuses célibataires	clients âgés	38,1%
<i>Big réssé</i>	jeunes clients	vendeuses adultes	22,2%
Bro	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes clients	2,3%
Brother	jeunes vendeuses	jeunes clients	7,4%
fiston	vendeurs âgés	jeunes vendeurs	66,6%

frangin	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs	12,5%
frangine	clients adultes	jeunes vendeuses	20%
frère	vendeuses mariées	vendeurs âgés	10,3%
Frérot	vendeurs âgés	vendeurs âgés	10,9%
grand-frère	jeunes clientes	vendeurs adultes	27,8%
grande-sœur	vendeurs célibataires	vendeuses adultes	26,1%
la mère	jeunes vendeuses	clientes âgées	83,3%
le père	clients adultes	vendeurs âgés	80%
ma fille	clientes âgées	jeunes vendeuses	100%
maman	jeunes vendeuses	vendeuses âgées	100%
ma mère	vendeuses adultes	clientes âgées	58,8%
ma petite-fille	vendeuses âgées	jeunes clientes	40%
ma sœur	clientes adultes	vendeuses adultes	54,5%
<i>Mater</i>	vendeurs célibataires	vendeuses âgées	17,4%
mon fils	clientes âgées	vendeurs âgés	75%
mon frère	vendeurs âgés	clients âgés	75%
mon père	vendeuses mariées	clients âgés	37,9%
Papa	vendeuses mariées	vendeurs âgés	27,1%
petit	clients adultes	jeunes vendeurs	40%
Petite	vendeurs mariés	jeunes vendeuses	25%

petit frère	vendeurs adultes	jeunes vendeurs	40%
petite sœur	clients adultes	jeunes vendeuses	20%
<i>Rémé</i>	vendeurs mariés	vendeuses âgées	25,9%
<i>Répé</i>	jeunes vendeurs	vendeurs âgés	37,5%
<i>Réssé</i>	jeunes clients	jeunes vendeuses	22,2%
Sis	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes clientes	4,4%
Sister	jeunes vendeuses	jeunes clientes	6,1%
sœurette	vendeurs mariés	vendeuses adultes	7,5%
tantine	jeunes clientes	vendeuses adultes	16,7%
Tonton	vendeuses célibataires	vendeurs âgés	33,3%
Termes amicaux			
Copine	vendeurs mariés	jeunes vendeuses	8,3%
l'ami	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes clients	4,5%
ma co	jeunes vendeuses	jeunes clientes	27,8%
ma copine	jeunes clientes	jeunes vendeuses	27,6%
mon ami	clients âgés	vendeurs adultes	100%
mon amie	vendeuses âgées	jeunes clientes	46,6%
mon pote	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs	18,7%

My friend	vendeurs adultes	vendeurs adultes	4,8%
Pote	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs	6,2%
Termes d'amour			
Chéri	vendeuses célibataires	vendeurs adultes	14,3%
Chérie	vendeurs célibataires	vendeuses adultes	26,1%
ma beauté	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes vendeuses	13%
ma chérie	clients âgés	vendeuses adultes	66,6%
ma douceur	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes clientes	4,3%
ma mie	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes clientes	2,6%
ma poupée	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes clientes	13%
ma puce	jeunes vendeuses	jeunes clientes	5,5%
mon amour	vendeuses célibataires	clients adultes	19%
mon bébé	vendeuses adultes	jeunes clientes	17,7%
mon chéri	vendeuses célibataires	clients adultes	47,6%
mon cœur	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes clientes	8,7%
mon goût	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes vendeuses	6,9%
trésor	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes vendeuses	8,7%
Termes purement camerounais			

Asso	vendeuses âgées	clientes âgées	93,3%
cannette	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs	6,2%
chaude	vendeuses adultes	clientes adultes	5,8%
<i>combi</i>	vendeurs célibataires	jeunes clientes	8,7%
<i>la nga</i>	jeunes clients	jeunes vendeuses	22,2%
Member	vendeurs adultes	vendeurs adultes	24,5%
Partenaire	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs	6,2%
Termes déférents			
DG	jeunes vendeurs	vendeurs adultes	18,7%
grand	jeunes clients	vendeurs adultes	66,6%
jeune fille	vendeuses adultes	jeunes clientes	5,8%
jeune home	vendeurs âgés	jeunes clients	33,3%
le boss	vendeurs âgés	vendeurs âgés	8,3%
Madame	clients âgés	vendeuses adultes	33,3%
Monsieur	vendeurs adultes	clients âgés	43,7%
Termes impersonnels			
Camarade	vendeuses célibataires	jeunes clients	15,8%
Fillette	clients âgés	jeunes vendeuses	33,3%
gars	vendeurs adultes	clients adultes	43,7%
Man	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes clients	31,8%

mon type	jeunes clients	jeunes vendeurs	11,1%
Termes intimes			
nom	vendeuses âgées	vendeuses âgées	20%
Prénom	vendeuses âgées	vendeuses adultes	80%
Surnom	vendeuses célibataires	jeunes vendeurs	42,8%
Termes sportifs			
Attaquant	vendeurs adultes	jeunes vendeurs	27,3%
Coéquipier	vendeurs adultes	vendeurs adultes	14,5%
mon 10	vendeurs adultes	jeunes clients	12,5%

Table 10.3. Termes d'adresse en langues officielles et en camfranglais

Nous soulignons la variété de termes d'adresse employés dans les marchés de la capitale politique du Cameroun. Les deux langues officielles (anglais et français) s'y retrouvent et nous avons également des termes en verlan français tels *répé*, et *rémé* qui sont l'apanage des jeunes générations. Les appellatifs sont rangés dans diverses catégories pour illustrer leur variété. Nous relevons que la catégorie *termes de parenté* est la plus riche, car les acteurs de ces lieux de commerce cherchent continuellement à amadouer les interlocuteurs pour pouvoir tirer profit de l'échange qu'ils négocient. Les termes d'amour sont beaucoup plus utilisés par les célibataires, sûrement parce que ceux-ci en plus de vouloir plaire parce qu'étant dans un lieu de négociations, veulent également plaire dans l'espoir de trouver l'amour. Les termes intimes quant à eux s'utilisent exclusivement entre les vendeurs, car le fait de travailler ensemble les rapproche et fait tomber les barrières, de l'intimité se crée. Pour ce qui est des termes sportifs, nous notons que seuls les hommes en font usage pour s'adresser d'ailleurs à

d'autres hommes, ceci révèle l'intérêt du sexe masculin pour le sport au Cameroun.

Les expressions *asso*, *cannette*, *chaude*, *combi*, *la nga*, *membre* et *partenaire* ont une signification particulière en contexte camerounais. *Asso*, l'apocope d' « associé », est un terme très usité dans les marchés camerounais. Toutes les générations en font usage pour notifier l'étroite collaboration entre les deux interlocuteurs. *Membre* et *partenaire* rentrent dans le même cadre de partenariat. *Cannette* qui signifie « bouteille à bière » ici désigne les personnes n'ayant pas de grande expérience dans un domaine et qui gagneraient à en acquérir. C'est la raison pour laquelle ce terme s'adresse uniquement aux jeunes interlocuteurs. *Combi* est en fait « complice » et s'utilise pour signaler la complicité entre les interlocuteurs. *La nga* c'est-à-dire « la fille » est une expression que l'on retrouve tant dans les marchés que partout ailleurs au Cameroun. Ces deux derniers termes appartiennent exclusivement au vocabulaire du camfranglais, pidgin associant les langues camerounaises, le français et l'anglaise et très employé par les jeunes générations.

Nous nous intéressons à présent aux termes en langues camerounaises.

Termes d'adresse en langues camerounaises

Ces appellatifs sont contenus dans le tableau ci-après :

Termes d'adresse	Langues d'origine	Signification	Émetteurs	Récepteurs	Pourcentages
<i>ǎ fáám</i>	éwondo	mon type	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs ewondo	23,7%
<i>alaji</i>	arabe	pèlerin de la Mecque	vendeurs adultes	vendeurs âgés nordistes	38,2%
<i>ǎ míníngá</i>	éwondo	madame	vendeuses âgées	vendeuses âgées ewondo	13,6%
<i>ǎ mǎngó</i>	éwondo	mon enfant	vendeuses âgées	jeunes vendeurs ewondo	19,4%
<i>ǎ ngǎndzama</i>	éwondo	ma fille	vendeurs âgés	vendeuses adultes ewondo	12,1%

<i>káldzama</i>	éwondo	ma sœur	vendeurs adultes	vendeuses adultes ewondo	5,7%
<i>mányə</i>	ghomálá'	mère de jumeaux	jeunes vendeurs	vendeuses âgées bamiléké	17,3%
<i>mamínyangá</i>	Pidgin-English	femme coquette	vendeurs adultes	jeunes vendeuses	8,9%
<i>manyáŋ</i>	basaa	mon frère	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs basaa	10,5%
<i>mănyāŋwɔmɔ</i>	éwondo	mon frère	vendeuses adultes	vendeuses adultes ewondo	11,7%
<i>mbóm</i>	éwondo	mon homonyme	jeunes clients	jeunes vendeurs	44,4%
<i>məmə</i>	éwondo	maman	jeunes vendeuses	vendeuses âgées ewondo	7,2%
<i>ndómdzama</i>	éwondo	mon frère	vendeuses âgées	vendeurs âgés ewondo	14%
<i>nyangó</i>	duálá	maman	vendeurs adultes	vendeuses adultes du Littoral	9,1%
<i>pəpá</i>	éwondo	papa	vendeuses adultes	vendeurs âgés ewondo	5,9%
<i>síta</i>	éwondo	ma sœur	vendeuses âgées	vendeuses âgées ewondo	40%
<i>sobaajo</i>	fulfulde	mon ami	vendeurs adultes	vendeurs adultes nordistes	7,2%
<i>tará</i>	éwondo	papa	jeunes vendeurs	jeunes vendeurs	16,8%

Table 10.4 : Termes d'adresse en langues camerounaises

Nous constatons qu'à l'exception de *mbóm*, *mamí nyangá* et *tará* qui s'utilisent à l'endroit de personnes de n'importe quelle région du Cameroun, les autres termes en langues camerounaises ciblent uniquement les locuteurs des langues concernées. En d'autres termes, les termes d'adresse en éwondo, en ghomálá', en basaa, en duálá ou en fulfulde sont utilisés

respectivement envers les récepteurs bə́tí, bamiléké, basaa, duálá ou nordistes. Ceci revient à signaler que ces termes ne sont employés que par des émetteurs connaissant l'origine ethnique de l'auditeur. Ces expressions ne sont pas utilisées uniquement par des locuteurs desdites langues. En effet, même les locuteurs d'autres langues connaissent le sens des termes qu'ils emploient pour s'adresser aux Bə́tí, Bamiléké, Basaa, Duálá ou Nordistes. L'existence d'une communication interculturelle est clairement visible dans nos données qui soulignent une divergence linguistique des termes d'adresse utilisés. Nous relevons également une grande utilisation des expressions en Ewondo, ceci prouve déjà le constant emploi de cette langue à Yaoundé.

Les termes utilisés pour se héler et se nommer les uns les autres dans les marchés de Yaoundé, qu'ils soient en langue officielle ou en langue maternelle, montrent la volonté de conserver des relations paisibles tant dans la signification des termes que dans l'usage de termes en langues nationales. Les habitués des marchés de Yaoundé ne répugnent pas à employer des mots dans des langues dont ils ne sont pas locuteurs natifs, preuve qu'ils ne rejettent pas la différence mais s'en accommodent et en font une force pouvant notamment leur permettre de tirer avantage de la situation d'échange en touchant la corde sensible chez le récepteur.

Usage de l'éwondo

Les faits suivants ont retenu notre attention :

1. 40,2% des conversations dans les marchés sont débutées en *éwondo*

Comme l'éwondo est le parler de Yaoundé, les acteurs des marchés engagent généralement les conversations dans cette langue sans vérifier l'origine ethnique de leur interlocuteur. Ils misent que la personne à laquelle ils s'adressent est Ewondophone. Il semblerait que par-là, ils comptent amener cette personne à croire à une origine commune les liant, ou tout simplement lui montrer qu'ils portent de l'intérêt à la langue de l'auditeur.

2. 9,1% des conversations sont achevées en éwondo

Cette baisse en fin de conversation prouve d'une part une diminution de volonté de plaire à l'interlocuteur une fois le marché conclu. D'autre part, elle s'explique par le fait que soit un, soit les deux interlocuteurs ne sont pas locuteurs Ewondo. Ce parler n'est donc pas utilisé ici pour des besoins de véhicularité.

3. 31,8% des acteurs (acheteurs et vendeurs) connaissent les nombres en éwondo

Pour marchander un article, il est indispensable de savoir en dire le prix. C'est la raison pour laquelle autant d'acteurs des marchés sont à même de compter en éwondo. Toujours conscients du droit de cité de l'éwondo dans ces marchés, ils apprennent le système numéral éwondo.

4. 65,7% des clients utilisent l'expression *é natányá ?* qui signifie « c'est combien ? »

Cette phrase permet de rentrer dans le vif du sujet qui se trouve être la négociation dans les marchés. Elle est de ce fait connue par une grande partie des intervenants de ce secteur.

Usage d'autres langues camerounaises

Des conversations en d'autres langues camerounaises ont été entendues durant l'enquête. Cependant, force a été de constater que ces échanges concernaient généralement des personnes ayant une origine commune. En d'autres termes, quand il est question de dialogues dans des parlers camerounais différents de l'éwondo les interlocuteurs partagent une même origine ethnique et en sont conscients.

Dialogue interculturel au Cameroun

Comme le souligne (Farenkia 2006), les termes d'adresse utilisés au Cameroun constituent un riche domaine de recherche. En effet, malgré leur origine française, beaucoup de termes d'adresse utilisés par des Camerounais francophones expriment des réalités et intentions particulières au Cameroun alors qu'ils indiqueraient des choses différentes dans d'autres pays francophones. Nous pouvons citer *asso*, *chaude* et *cannette* qui ont une signification spéciale dans les marchés de Yaoundé, une signification qui n'est pas la même dans les marchés d'ailleurs. Farenkia (2006) parle d'ailleurs de la *camerounisation* des mots

et expressions. Nous avons l'exemple des termes de parenté dont l'utilisation est prononcée dans les marchés de Yaoundé et visent à détendre l'atmosphère entre les interlocuteurs sans impliquer automatiquement des raccords familiaux.

Ainsi, le locuteur francophone camerounais a une manière très particulière de s'adresser à son auditeur. Plusieurs termes d'adresse constituent un véritable espace interculturel où les transferts culturels, les prêts et les calques se côtoient continuellement. Ainsi, la valeur de ces éléments n'est pas au niveau linguistique, mais plutôt au degré culturel. C'est sûrement ce que signifie (Farenkia 2006) lorsqu'il dit 'les termes employés trahissent le plus souvent un ancrage socioculturel et le profil communicatif de toute la société.'

Exprimer la solidarité, la fraternité ou le respect à la manière Camerounaise équivaut à tenir compte du répertoire linguistique en même temps que des considérations culturelles. Il s'agit donc d'opérer des choix linguistiques qui font ressortir le croisement des cultures. En bref, il est question de parler plusieurs langues en même temps sans s'indigner de l'origine des mots. C'est le cas dans les marchés de Yaoundé où nous trouvons des termes comme *mbóm*, *nyangó*...

4. Conclusion

Tout au long de cet article, nous avons examiné les diverses dénominations dont font usage les marchands et les clients des marchés de Yaoundé dans les interactions verbales. Force a été donnée de constater que certains paramètres sociaux influencent et conditionnent le choix des appellatifs à l'instar du sexe, de l'âge et du statut matrimonial. Un autre fait notoire est la multitude d'origines des termes d'adresse en usage dans ces lieux de commerce, preuve de la tolérance culturelle qui y est naturellement vécue. La grande utilisation de l'éwondo dans ces marchés est aussi à souligner puisque démontrant un besoin d'insertion sociale car même les non locuteurs adoptent ce parler local d'une certaine manière.

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¹Marché ; (1) Marché Mokolo ; (2) Marché Elig-Edzoa ; (3) Marché Essos ; (4) Marché central ; (5) Marché Mfoundi ; (6) Marché Mvog-Mbi ; (7) Marché Ekounou ; (8) Marché Melen ; (9) Marché Biyem-Assi ; (10) Marché Mendong .

Total immersion as community-gearred approach for an efficient revitalization of endangered languages

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Abstract

For over some decades, scholars have been putting in place strategies for safeguarding and revitalizing endangered languages in general and African ones in particular. The framework adopted in this effort has been motivated by the 2003 UNESCO report on the assessment of language vitality and the degree of endangerment. The methodological approaches vary from individual to individual, yet none of them has been clearly established, described, valorised and prescribed as a valid model. This paper aims to show that the total immersion of the researcher in the target community of the language under revitalization is an approach that best allows both the outside researcher and the community to be involved in the process for better results and sustainability.

The total immersion approach is recommended if language revitalizers view the activities on endangered languages as a means for social transformation or social development, beneficial at the same time to the researcher, to the scientific community, but mostly to the linguistic community under study. These activities include and combine: language description, standardisation, modernisation, materials development, and literacy training as a unique and indivisible programme.

Thus, the total immersion approach is viewed as a community-gearred approach whose adoption could lead to satisfactory results anywhere if taken into account in each case the peculiarities of each community.

1. Introduction

Revitalising endangered languages has become the challenge of field linguistics and NGOs whose first concern is the protection and promotion of such languages on which many researchers do carry their project out of the community. The out-of-community research situation excludes the researcher's full presence in the field and the participation of the community in the project. For the community to be directly involved in the revitalisation process of their language, the revitalisation project must basically rely on the community. Total immersion, in order to be efficient, must be conceived to be community-geared. In this paper, I endeavour to show that for efficient revitalisation to be, its activities must be centred in the community of the language under study. In order to address the issue, the paper is organised into seven main sections.

The first section discusses the relevance of total immersion, the second looks at the issue of sensitization of the community as a strategic key to the success of the approach; the third addresses the problem of literacy classes within a total immersion while the fourth section tackles the issue of reference material development within this research method. Parts six and seven focus respectively on the researcher himself in touch with the community, and the challenges of total immersion.

2. Relevance of the total immersion approach for efficient language revitalization

In this subsection of the paper, I shall provide a brief discussion on the history of immersion before delving into the methods of language revitalisation. Afterwards, I shall shed light on the relevance of total immersion in language revitalisation.

Brief history of immersion

Originally, immersion was a method of teaching a second language in which the target language is used as the means of

instruction. The target language is used here as a teaching tool surrounding students in the second language. It allows the learner to spend time in an environment operating solely in the target language. Today, with field linguistics, it has become a useful method in the process of language revitalization.

According to (Grenoble and Whaley 2006), there are six main methods for language revitalization, namely, total immersion, partial-immersion, the local language as a second language 'foreign language,' community-based programmes, master-apprentice programmes and language reclamation. I shall briefly explain each of the methods below.

3. Methods of language revitalization

Total immersion requires that the researcher thoroughly settles in the native community of the language he/she is revitalizing. In partial immersion, as discussed by Grenoble and Whaley (2006), not only is the researcher not fully immersed, but also, he/she conducts some classes in both the local language and in the language of wider communication. In the local language as a second language 'foreign language' model, local languages introduced in school settings are viewed as something 'foreign' to learners. The master-apprentice programme, according to Grenoble and Whaley, was developed in 1992 in California to address language vitality, helped to produce apprentice-graduates who are conversationally proficient in the target language and are prepared to teach it to others. Finally, the language reclamation model refers to the revival or reclamation of languages that are no longer spoken. It deals with resuscitation and awakening.

Among these methods, I consider total immersion as the best option to revitalize a language. Although the target of the total immersion approach is language learners or community speakers' members, the researcher also benefits a lot in the process. This model is built on the commonsense premise that the best way to learn (at the same time teaching) a language is to live in the community and create a learning environment for

literacy in which that language is used constantly as the sole language of interaction and mostly for literacy. This model is convenient in communities where there are still some speakers who could possibly be part of the creating of the immersion environment. It is true that it is not always easy to apply such a model in most communities because of reluctance, mostly where the researchers are not speakers of the language; when they are outsiders.

This model requires that all field instructions be conducted in the local language. Total immersion is also pragmatic in that it allows the researcher(s), through a long stay in the community and life with community members, to acquire the local culture, to live with the local people, and to be exposed on a daily basis to the revitalized language.

In field linguistics, the total immersion of the researcher in the natural environment of the language is more than immersion in language learning, notably in second language learning. In the case of total immersion, the researcher gets into direct contact with the people and the natural area and environment of the language under development. Then s/he learns the language and acquires the local culture through language development activities and exposure to the natural environment. The total immersion approach in language revitalization aims at building the researcher's language and cultural skills (Cummins 1979). This is useful both for daily communication purposes and for facilitating the researcher's field activities.

Furthermore, in language revitalization, immersion is perceived as a three directional cost-effective research tool: the researcher, language specialists and mostly the community benefits from this kind of approach. The researcher is at the same time a learner and an agent of development in the community. The outcome of such projects also becomes useful to language specialists when they produce scientific documents like descriptive grammars.

In total immersion, the researcher is like a development agent because of his community-centred activities, and is quite

different from those researchers who simply go to the field, collect their data and leave.

For the model to be fruitfully implemented and to succeed, the community must be involved in the language development activities. Community's conviction and commitment is only possible if the researcher has successfully conducted a strategic consciousness-raising campaign right at the beginning of his/her project.

4. Sensitization of the community: a strategic task for success in total immersion

When a linguist, researcher and especially an outsider settles in a community in the perspective of developing the language of that community, s/he must find strategies that will allow him/her to build an acceptable and conducive environment for the success of his/her action and activities. This goes through the sensitization of local people. The main goal of sensitization is to capture the responsiveness of the native speakers and convince them to contribute and collaborate through their effective participation, for the success of the development of their language through empowerment.

Most often, as far as African languages are concerned, according to the ideas spread all over the years about African local languages, even some of those who are still speaking their languages as natives do not perceive any interest in their development. This behaviour is usually construed from the underestimation glued to African mother tongues since the colonial era, and consciously or unconsciously nurtured at a given moment by African countries' national, regional or local governments. Although in these days the situation is changing, most people are still not convinced. In fact, nowadays, some Africans have developed as their mother tongue a foreign language, language of former colonial masters.

It is actually the case of English and French in Cameroon as pointed out by (Bitja'aKody 2000). Thus, to convince the population to adhere to projects based on the total immersion

approach, language promoters and researchers should establish strategic programmes in order to raise awareness in the community. These sensitisation strategies or rather consciousness-raising campaigns shall mainly focus on the guidelines discussed below.

5. Guidelines for field sensitization in total immersion for efficient language revitalization

For sensitization to be efficient in a community within the total immersion approach, it must follow some guidelines and principles presented here as follows:

1. Explaining to community members the role and goal of the presence of the researcher in the community;
2. Explaining to the native-speakers the role of the language committee in the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the community;
3. Encouraging parents, speakers-hearers to sustain the intergenerational transmission of their language at home;
4. Inviting the local population to effectively cooperate all along the execution of the project;
5. Raising awareness on the necessity of dialect unification for suitable harmonisation of the orthography.

Hence, the researcher could raise special awareness on the issue of dialectal differences (not as a source of conflict) and the need to develop a standard model for all. In fact, the provision of information on dialectal differences and dialect unification in the written form is a crucial task in the promotion of a language. Community members shall be instructed on how to preserve a unique written form of their language while at the speaking level, each speaker keeps his/her own dialectal variant. Community members shall all be informed of the advantages of dialect unification. For this sensitisation to succeed, it must be generalised in the community

6. Generalization of sensitization campaigns and dialect unification within the total immersion approach

Community members shall be advised on the sociological importance of dialect unification (in its written form), as a unique source of viable language unification, social cohesion for speakers when mutual intelligibility is attested. This does not imply that the oral use of the language in all its dialectal components is a source of problems. In fact, unity is prescribed for the written form, but not at the oral level. From an economic point of view, documents are produced in one dialect and its costs are reduced, for their marketing to be cost-effective. It goes alike with personnel training whose costs will be less expensive with the development of one dialect.

Sensitization shall consist in presenting the advantages of a common written model, in instructing native speakers of the language on the broadcasting and popularization of the standard norm. In addition, the speakers of the non-standard dialect shall be invited to show a conducive and a positive attitude towards the standard norms. According to Watters (1989), this attitude favours social cohesion.

It is true that it will not always be easy to convince everybody in a community on the above stated facts. Whenever the researcher shall go in the community, s/he shall be able to provide strong argumentation in order to clarify, convince and reassure some incredulous native speakers of the usefulness of the work.

The sensitization campaign must be generalized in the whole linguistic area because it is viewed as a continuous activity. Wherever the researcher must go, he or she shall be able to proceed alike and provide the same strong argumentation given that community members usually have the same degree of interest or the same concern. The sensitization campaigns shall be synchronized. Most often, from one locality to another, the researcher must be accompanied at least by a native speaker, neo-learner who already masters the contours of the project s/he is implementing, and who could easily explain the goal of

the project to his fellows in the local language. In this vein, he or she will be acting as facilitator.

This sensitization is then the first factor whose success or failure will condition the participation of the population or not, native speakers and learners to whom the programme is destined. The involvement of the local population, even to a lesser extent, shows the positive reaction and reception of the programme in the community through collaboration.

7. Total immersion and literacy classes in the field

Total immersion, as community-centred approach implies the training of local people in literacy. This section shows how the model developed by the researcher has to be promoted through the training of local people. It is indeed during the training sessions that s/he is also able to formally acquire the elementary grammatical structures of the language for day-to-day communication. Furthermore, training sessions allow him/her to gather materials useful for elaborating the different booklets used as teaching tools.

Literacy classes helped to build community-based development programmes. Literacy begins with reading and writing. This is why the researcher must start the promotion of the standard model by training local people to write and read. The training must take the form of literacy classes where participant observation is the main data elicitation technique, formal classroom the main setting and teacher/student role-playing the teaching/learning strategy. This shall be for the learner and the researcher, facilitator, the occasion to gather useful data for the elaboration of teaching materials. Literacy could start within the community on the elaboration, testing and validation of the alphabet and then move to the elaboration of the orthography, by identifying the keywords useful for constructing short sentences for the conception of a wall alphabet, and then an alphabet book. In fact, literacy activities in a community could be presented according to the following three (3) axes:

1. Teach volunteer speakers-hearers to write and read their language through an alphabet and a well-established orthography. After few months of apprenticeship/learning, some neo-learners should be able to acknowledge/recognise, identify and read any grapheme. They should be able to find a concrete word (within which is found the grapheme, focus of the lesson), which materialises the grapheme, and finally, use it in a short sentence. Literacy could allow the researcher to identify and solve some problems faced by those speakers who are literate in a foreign language, language of wider communication and who have the possibility for self-literacy in their language. With the contribution/assistance of some neo-literates who already know how to read and write, the researcher could start elaborating some manuals. This should be done alternatively with the teaching activities;

2. Literacy classes could allow researchers to identify and solve some specific problems. With the contribution/assistance of some neo-literates who already know how to write and read, the researcher could start the elaboration of some manuals. This should be done alternatively with the teaching activities;

3. Literacy classes are those instances where the researcher is able to identify community members who could possibly be empowered and later on become trainers of the trainers. During alphabetization classes, the researcher is able to collect further materials like texts from the neo-literates. These texts will be useful for the elaboration of different teaching materials.

8. Total immersion and elaboration of reference documents

If reference documents could be elaborated out of the community of the language under revitalization, it might not be possible in such a situation, to come up with a content which really fits the local native speakers' feelings and expressions, the description of the colourful environment. This is to argue that field context is the required and very productive setting where

the researcher could design reference documents with native speakers.

Initiation to reading and writing is a decisive step in reference materials production. In fact, at the same time the researcher is instructing local people on how to learn to read and write s/he is also working out strategies for material production.

My intention in this section of the paper is not to explain the techniques for producing reference documents because they could be found in (Tadadjeu et. al 2004), (Gudschinsky 1973), (Van Dyken and Mba 1993), but to focus on how the activities that lead to the elaboration of the documents could be conducted.

Most of the aspects of the documents developed by the researchers shall be elaborated during classes while others could be built outside the classroom through personal observation, discussions and talks with community leaders and during storytelling sessions. Notwithstanding, after elaboration in class, the researcher shall check accuracy together with community members. Some sessions could be geared towards special issues related to the type of the document which is expected to be built within a limited time frame.

At the end of the teachings based on reading and writing, neo-learners shall already be able to write and read simple sentences. This is the stage where the alphabet chart, the alphabet book and the transitional manual could already be elaborated. Each time the researcher starts the elaboration of a new document in class; lessons shall be organized in such a way as to gather information on the type of contents to be built and to target the aspects of the manual to be elaborated.

9. Total immersion and the mobility of the researcher in the field

The promotion of the developed standard model should not only be the concern of those community members who are around the area where the researcher settles. S/he should go to

the different local areas to instruct other local people on how to write and read the language.

The strategy to be adopted shall be very simple. Every time the researcher would like to move from one locality to another, s/he should be accompanied by a neo-learner, i.e., a person who is already acquainted with the programme and who could possibly facilitate communication. Once in the locality, the first step should be to contact the local authorities, commencing from the local traditional ruler: this is fundamental in field contacts. When the contacts are secured, during the very first meeting day, s/he should clearly explain the goal of his presence; s/he could discuss issues related to the scheduling of the first general meeting day.

The role of mobility is very important in that it allows the researcher to get into contact with the authorities at different levels in the community and to get directly in touch with the local population from all the areas. The familiarity which results from this contact eases the immersion, the integration of the researcher in the community and the data collection procedure useful for the description of the language and finally, material production together with community members.

10. The researcher and the total immersion approach

Finally, if a fieldworker is not wanted in a community, s/he will not be initially able to settle in. A fieldworker can only be able to settle and stay in a welcoming community.

Dixon (2007) points out that usually, when a language is still spoken as a first language by everyone in the community, such a community is likely to welcome a stranger or outsider who wishes to learn the language at the same time s/he is developing and teaching it together with the local people.

As already pointed out above, in such contexts, the researcher is able to learn the local culture, acquire day-to-day communication tools and try to speak the language. Through daily exposure to the local culture and local people, s/he could learn the community's social know-how. In order to be

assimilated, s/he must, for instance, farm with the villagers, go to fetch water, play with the younger people, etc. These situations favour automatic recording of thematic vocabulary.

In general, total immersion gives the opportunity to have as many consultants as possible outside classrooms (when the researcher has formalised his field literacy into formal classroom setting) in each locality. However, the researchers must arrange with his consultants a timetable which suits their availability. This is because, such field activities fall within the consideration of adult literacy. In fact, in such instances, the principles of andragogy are required and shall be applied.

Usually, researchers have not to make the mistake to provide at the early stage of their activities in the field substantial concrete financial compensation to their consultants. If so, this could make a special resonance in the community such that everywhere s/he goes, s/he is asked for incentives from the consultants, regularly or at times. What could be done to motivate the consultants is, for instance, giving them recompense in kind, by systematically checking what they like and granting them when necessary.

In some remote communities, some common goods such as soap, salt and hoe, if a farming community, could be provided for women. A bottle of wine, a cutlass to each of the main men consultants could create enthusiasm among the informants. This will be very significant if the community earns her livelihood through farming. This has not to be considered as a pay for the job they are doing, but as a gift in respect of services rendered. Since field situations and experience are different from one community to another, if a consultant has a regular job, the language researcher should arrange to have time off to work with him.

In total immersion, one builds a relationship with each of a small group of reliable language consultants. The researcher should be able to help the consultant understand what he/she is trying to do in order to facilitate access to the requested information. In this case, the consultant may even anticipate on what the linguist is looking for. This is the advantage of a

priceless community-based immersion-related partnership. The researcher must integrate the community in order to be accepted to the extent that could allow him/her carry out the activities.

From what precedes, within a total immersion approach, the linguist has to work simultaneously on many fronts, six of them being prominent:

1. Raising awareness among community members;
2. Becoming part of the community and beginning to learn to speak the language: this will give the researcher more esteem;
3. Collecting data for elicitation;
4. Recording and analyzing texts;
5. Developing a standard model for the language;
6. Promoting the standard model developed;
7. Developing basic reference materials;
8. Setting a local language committee.

The researcher must check the accuracy of the collected data by asking native speakers to listen and to correct them, by constructing short sentences: this can be easily done during literacy classes. A mistake a researcher must always avoid is to record the texts and transcribe them out of the field. It is not advisable to do so while in the field, over all if they are collected with a recorder.

From all the issues addressed above, it is clear that when the researcher is welcomed in the community of the language s/he is going to develop; s/he finds it easy to assimilate into the community, he/she immerses into it and has the possibility to acquire as far as possible the good local cultural habits. These considerations pave the way to the success of his/her field activities.

Because the different activities carried out by the researcher are community-oriented, when s/he is an outsider and must leave the community at some point in time, s/he must empower the community such that even after his departure, the literacy activities should continue. In Cameroon, in such contexts, the linguist fieldworker, before leaving the community sets a local

entity that will be in charge of the promotion of the language and look after its correct usage in the written form. This approach will also favour learning by doing in the community because, as (Mba 2007) points out, 'the learning by doing process will be better a way to acquire ownership and boost the local managerial capacities.'

Every field research being exclusive and unique, every field researcher must mould his or her strategies to match the very situation s/he faces. It is therefore worth pointing out that in a collaborative fieldwork, many potential obstacles are to be overcome by the researcher in order to maintain an ongoing working relationship with community members. To overcome these obstacles, the researcher must tactfully plan his/her activities and this requires some challenges.

11. The challenges of total immersion in language revitalization

Although total immersion is viewed as the ideal approach in real and efficient language revitalization situation, it presents some challenges. The first challenge of the approach is the attitude of the community towards the research project and mostly when the researcher is an outsider. If the community is not convinced right at the beginning of the usefulness of the project, it will fail because no one will be ready for participation.

Overcoming the scornful attitudes developed here and there by some or most community members and leaders who might consider the project as a strategic machination to penetrate their society and take away its secrets and 'soul,' is one of the challenges. This is therefore to be tactfully addressed as already exposed above. As I mentioned earlier, tactful sensitization implying all its assets is to be adopted here.

The second and angle stone of the project is finances. In fact, if after the designing of the project the researcher does not succeed in securing the necessary fund for implementing his/her project, it will not be possible to undertake even the first steps. Financial means constitute the starting point of the project.

Without money, no researcher can be able to opt for this approach.

Any other difficulties to be overcome by the researcher might be related to field mobility. It can happen that one is unable to visit all the villages where the language is spoken because of lack of transportation means, time constraints and the multiple concomitant activities related to the language (data collection, literacy classes, material development, etc.). In some areas of the world where such research is conducted, it is not possible to easily move within the linguistic area in which one is working in the field because of either lack of transportation means or road related problems i.e., problems of accessibility.

The researcher has to be lucky enough in order to benefit from the clemency of the natural environment. Most often, s/he is exposed to the reject of this environment with recurrent health problems. For instance, in most parts of Africa, researchers usually face the threat of malaria in tropical forests. In general, adaptation is a problem, an obstacle to overcome and which must be overcome by the researcher if s/he would like to be part of the community.

To overcome some field-related problems, one should multiply organize sensitisation campaigns, look for more facilitators, and visit more local traditional rulers (where they exist) or community leaders to explain the foundation of the project. The very first facilitators should be the channel through which one can also have access to some localities and facilities. In fact, when the researcher has to move to any village, s/he has to be accompanied by a facilitator who will have to explain what the researcher says in the local language, the real reasons of his presence in the locality and the importance of the project for their community. Sensitisation comes up then as a key strategy for success or failure in fieldwork and field activities. Through sensitisation, if well conducted, as the project goes on, as its importance becomes visible, many more community members can cooperate and participate, although beyond all the considerations, not everybody in the community are ready to accept an outsider.

12. Conclusion

As proven all along this paper, the total immersion of the researcher, be him/her an outsider or a native of the community to which belongs the language s/he is developing, is the best revitalisation method for an endangered or underdeveloped language. This method helps to build a bridge between the researcher and the community and facilitates communion between the two entities in spite of its challenges. Communion is viewed as a prerequisite for the success of field activities in total immersion; an approach which not only allows the training of the speakers-hearers to reading and writing, but formalises the relationship between the researcher and the neo-learners, and by implication, the community. This relationship and familiarity favours literacy activities and the development of didactic materials.

Furthermore, the approach permits the researcher to be part of the community as s/he is also able to learn to speak the language through daily exposure. Total immersion is therefore viewed as tri-dimensionally beneficial approach: it first benefits to the community, then to the researcher as an individual and finally to the scientific community as the researcher's field experience is shared among scientists.

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When the “wrong” language is being documented: language documentation and language dynamics among the Bakola of Cameroon

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1. Introduction

What do we mean by a ‘wrong language’? There are some cases where a researcher literally discovers that the language he has been researching is not the language he came to study. This is a situation brought up in Bower’s *Linguistic Fieldwork*:

Occasionally, you might get the wrong language completely. This is pretty rare, but sometimes it happens that consultants either don’t speak the language you think they do, or they do speak it but they prefer to give you another language instead (Bower 2007:88).

This article is about a less extreme but more common case of ‘the wrong language’: when the language you are studying does not conform to your expectations. This is not a case of mistaken *identity* but rather a case of mistaken *ideology*. Sometimes a language does not ‘fit’ the researcher’s expectations and preconceptions. When this is the case, the language data will ‘feel wrong.’ There may even be a temptation to ignore some of the upsetting data and create an analysis in line with what the language ‘should be.’ In the course of documenting the Bakola language, the preconceptions which we started with clashed with the realities of the data which we were documenting.

2. Preconceptions

Bakola is a Bantu (A80) language spoken by forest foragers (Pygmies) in the coastal region of Cameroon. The sociolinguistic situation of the Bakola speakers is remarkable for the extreme multilingualism and for the variation which exists both in individual speech and in local varieties. This will be discussed in more detail in section two. The language seems to be undergoing a great deal of change currently as the lifestyle of the people has greatly changed. Different sectors of the population are changing their speech patterns, and the language seems to be 'fragmenting' into at least three separate speech forms. This is the situation which led us to consider that the Bakola language was 'endangered'. We were able to launch a project to document the Bakola languageⁱ, and to plan out the project to record data from three very different areas representing very different varieties of Bakola.

This section will discuss some of the preconceptions which the researchers had going into the documentation process. These included:

- (A) Ideas about languages in general,
- (B) Ideas about forest foragers, and
- (C) Ideas about Bakola.

A. Ideas about languages in general

There is much to say about each of these ideas. It is not that any of these ideas are held in an absolute way. Rather, they make up a series of basic expectations which are part of the tradition of descriptive linguistics. The references given are discussions about the issues, and not necessarily endorsements of these preconceptions.

1. *Language purity*: there should be an 'ancestral code' (Woodbury 2005, 2011). This code would have special interest for linguistic researchers.
2. *Homogeneity*: there should be an 'ideal speaker, ideal language, monolithic and homogeneous object of contemplation' (Sugita 2007:243). This expectation may

not always be expressed, but it is often implicit in the way we describe languages.

3. *Clearly-defined systems*: there should be 'language as system', as well as 'language as practice' (Wright 2007). Linguistic analysis is particularly interested in describing patterns which have few or no exceptions.
4. *Identity*: one language should basically correspond with one community (Tabouret-Keller 2007).
5. *Standard reference dialects*: one speech form should emerge as the most central or important variety (Weisseman, Sadembouo, and Tadamjeu 1983).

B. Ideas about forest foragers

While some expectations came from the tradition of descriptive linguistics, another set of expectations came from the literature about forest foragers in the Congo Basin.

1. *Unique and definable identity*: the categories of "forager" and "farmer" are expected to be quite distinct and easy to separate. This is often not the case (Rupp 2011). The Bakola identity is especially hard to define, as there is not even a common name which they all share. Some of them are called *Bakola* while others are called some form of the name *Bagyele*ⁱⁱ (Renaud 1976).
2. *Highly mobile lifestyle*: many foragers do have mobile lifestyles, although the Bakola are in the process of becoming sedentary (Loung 1959).
3. *Language homogeneity over a large area*: some forest-forager languages, such as Aka and Baka, do seem to be very homogeneous over large areas. This is seen as being connected to the constant interaction which the various communities have with each other due to their mobility (Duke 2001).
4. *Forest foragers speak a variety of a neighbouring language*: all forest foragers speak languages related to the languages of current or former neighbours. Some of these languages do however seem to be

separate languages on their own right (Bahuchet 2006).

5. *Forest foragers are the “original citizens” of Africa*: it is a common belief that the forest foragers are the indigenous peoples of Africa. The truth, however, seems to be much more complex (Bahuchet 1993, Blench 2006, Duke 2002).

C. Ideas about Bakola

There are some previous studies about Bakola, including a two-volume phonology and nominal morphology (Renaud 1976).

1. *Two dialects of Bakola*: previous studies by (Renaud 1976) noted two distinct varieties of the language (Kola and Gyele), which “existed side-by-side in the same camp.” One variety, Kola, was said to be more conservative. We currently have documented at least four very different varieties, and there may be more. The differences are clearly related to influence of various neighbouring languages.
2. *Bakola is a variety of Kwasio*: some Bakola claim that they “only speak Kwasio,” which is one of the neighbouring languages (Duke, personal experience). It is true that one variety of Bakola (the one which is spoken in the Kwasio contact area) is very similar to Kwasio. However, other varieties show great influence from different neighbouring languages, either from Basaa, Bakoko, or Bulu.

3. Sociolinguistic situation of the Bakola

As mentioned above, Bakola is a Bantu (A80) language spoken by forest foragers (‘Pygmies’) in the coastal region of Cameroon. The speakers of Bakola live in about 150 small settlements scattered over a large area. They are hunter-gatherers who are becoming farmers as the forest which is their traditional home has become compromised or destroyed. The Bakola have formed strong attachments to various

neighbouring farmer groups. Important neighbouring languages include: Kwasioⁱⁱⁱ (A80), Basaa (A40), Bakoko (A40), and Bulu (A70).

As the settlements have become less mobile, many Bakola communities have come to identify more with their neighbours than with the other Bakola, who they may rarely see. This close relationship has lead the various Bakola communities speaking the languages of their immediate neighbours more and more. In fact, all Bakola speak at least one neighbouring language with a very high degree of proficiency, and many speak four or five neighbouring languages. They have also developed registers of Bakola which “sound like Kwasio” or “sound like Basaa.” Figure 12.1 gives a basic map of the Bakola region, showing the placing of the different “contact zones.”

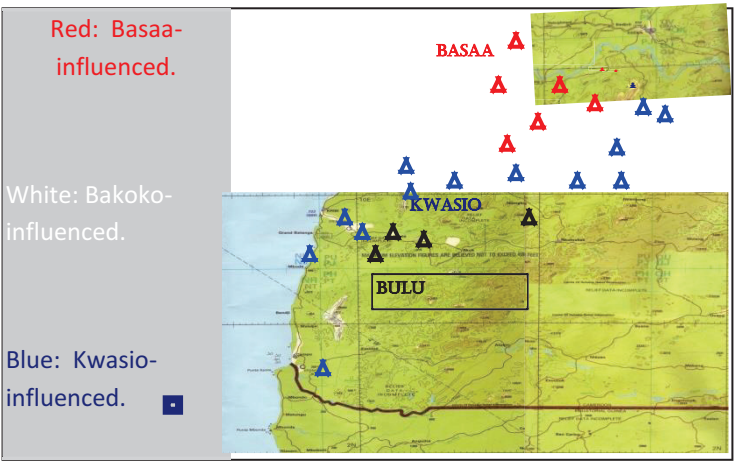


Figure 12.1: The Bakola and their neighbours

This situation of language contact has led to some very different varieties of Bakola, or even to a fragmentation of Bakola into what are becoming very different speech forms. In Figure 12.2, some lexical items are shown for three neighbouring languages and for the Bakola varieties which are “influenced” by those languages.

Basaa	Bakola-Basaa	Bakoko	Bakola-Bakoko	Mvumbo	Bakola-Mvumbo	English
ṛũ	ṛúlù	ṛũ	ṛúlì	ṛúlì	ṛúlì	body
kɔ̀ɔ̀	kúrú ~ kóró	ìkòyòò	kòndɔ̀	kúrí~ kùndè	kúrí ~ kúrí	skin
ḡḡɔ̀	ḡlò	ḡmú	ḡlò	ḡlù	ḡlù	head
mbòm	m'òzò	mbòm	mbòmbú	mb ^h wòm	mbòmɓó ~mbòmbó	face
dʒis	dízò	díh	dʒisi	dʒíì	dʒisi	eye
kúr	Kúzà	kút	Kútà	pfùsà	kúsà	fist
lìmáŋ	límá	lìmán	dìmá	móŋ	lìmáŋ~ límá	cheek
ṛò	mwànà	àṛù	ṛùmbù	nùmbì	nùmbò	mouth
kín	kí	tʃín	tsí	tʃín	kí	hair
h'òŋ	mbùŋà	vòn	mbùɔ̀	mvàŋ	mbvùɔ̀~ mbvùòŋ	neck
lìbóŋ	lìbɔ̀	lìbón	dìbɔ̀	bwòŋ	lìbɔ̀~lìbóŋ	knee

Table12.1: Lexical variation in Bakola and three neighbouring languages varieties.

There is much more to be said about the sociolinguistic situation of Bakola. At the very least there are different registers, each one showing influence from one of the neighbouring languages. These registers are not just different in their phonetics, phonology, and lexicon. They also show some differences in the morphology, such as the noun class systems. Future studies are planned to present more about this remarkable situation^{iv}.

4. Challenges to our preconceptions

The work of language documentation entails a conjoined approach from both “etic” and “emic” methodologies. Since language documentation is most of the time a heavy enterprise which requires substantial funding, the choice to research on one specific language rather than another is crucially dependent on the researcher’s ability to stick to the expectations of the institutional funders, whose criteria of

eligibility, accurate and informed though they may be, cannot always account for every single language endangerment situation around the world.

Documentary situations as pointed out by (Woodbury 2003) can be very different, just as can be the documentary agendas. Though a reasonable knowledge of the overall situation of the language to be documented is expected from the applicant, and though it is expected that he or she should have carried out at least a sociolinguistic survey of the language he is interested in, part of the researcher's insight into the language situation might be drawn from existing scholarly works, or inspired by presumably similar language situations, as propounded in the literature. The tension between the funding constraints and the researcher's determination to document a language thus usually results in the latter being prompted to embark into some sort of seductive exercise whereby he is led to make simulations ("etic") on the outcome of the research work, generally in a positive and optimistic mood. Most often however, the researcher may be brought to reconsider some of his hypotheses against the glaring effect of the field reality.

5. The ideology of an isomorphic relationship between language, identity and ethnicity

Language, ethnicity and identities are generally thought of as a tri-dimensional entity, with its three sides mutually implying one another. On the link that exists between language and identity for example, Tabouret-Keller (2007) argues that the language spoken by somebody and his or her identity as a speaker of this language are inseparable. As such, language acts are acts of identity (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). The biblical 'anecdote' of the language identity test^vcarried out by the Gileadites on the battle-field over the people of Ephraïm to discriminate between friends and foes is widely cited as an illustration of the consubstantiality between language and identity.

In Cameroon for example, English and French, the two official languages, were historically distributed between two different territories along the lines of two former colonial masters' realms, France and Great Britain. These territories were respectively the Western Cameroon for the English speaking part, and the Eastern Cameroon for the French-speaking part. As a consequence of this colonial partition of the country, the anglophone and francophone identities are nowadays inextricably associated with people who originate from either of these formal territories, irrespective of their actual language profile as English or French speakers, so much so that the concepts of anglophone and francophone have become purely iconic representations pertaining to ethnicity in the mind of most Cameroonians (Anchimbe 2013). Dabène and Billiez report that one adolescent whose parents have settled in Grenoble (France) from North Africa a long time ago was asked to tell what his language was. He declared: 'Arabic is my language but I don't speak it' (Dabène and Billiez 1987:76). The conceptual implication behind the preconceived algorithm "language = identity = ethnicity" is that it translates language practices into some abstract and unified code on the one hand, and presupposes coherence and continuity between the cultural and linguistic experiences of those who are subsumed within the limits of a perceived language community.

One pernicious face of identity as a derived product of language is that, it usually is melted in the misleading process of *otherization* whereby people project essentialist representations on others (Holliday, Hyde and Cullman 2004). When *otherization* is construed alongside social and/or cultural domination, the result is a passive absorption of the given identity by the dominated group. Bakola as mentioned above, share the same existential identity as "pygmies" and as "inferior human beings" irrespective of which neighbouring group they are in closer contact^{vi}. Their common anthropomorphic features and lifestyle are such a powerful stigma they share together, that the outside world always tend to cluster them into a unified community. In their actual social experience

however, some Bakola identify themselves more with their closer patrons than with other Bakola “sub-community”.

One Bakola chief in the Bakoko contact region, when asked to tell about the history of their migration to the present settlement, proudly declared that they originate from *Ngog Lituba*, which is allegedly the cradle land of their patrons^{vii}. In the struggle to survive the permanent subjugation from their neighbours, the Bakola have to constantly adjust to the social situation in which they find themselves at a given moment. Ethnicity and identity have to be actively performed and constructed by a group of people who are embodied in a permanent role as social actors, in their interaction with outsiders. By so doing, they carry along a multiple sense of identity and ethnicity.

The consequence of this multiple sense of belonging is that, diversity and dynamics are inherent and active components of the social life and social identity of the people; individual monolingualism among Bakola is almost inexistent. The received preconception that the language repertoire of a multilingual individual can be sorted out hierarchically in his cognitive apparatus (i.e. L1, L2, etc.) may not consistently hold in the case of the Bakola. The mere concept of one’s owned language is puzzling to them, as can be seen through the following excerpt where a researcher (R) forces a Bakola speaker (S) to switch back to what the researcher believes should be his (the speaker’s) owned language.

S: (in bàsàá):jàk mè mè jè-dʒ-ǒj
 COM 1SG 1SG be.PRES 5-name
 lé Mìnsêm
 that Minsem
 “As for me, my name is Minsem”

R (in bàsàá): òń pót ʰhóp ʰw-óŋ
 Yes speak.IMP language 1-1SG.POSS
 “Yes speak in your language”

S: (in bàsàá): mbáj j - êm ì – ní ná ʰLépdʒóm
 Village 7-2SG.POSS 7-Dem here Lep

“My home village is here in Lepdjom”

R (in bàsàá): pót ⁺hóp ⁺w - óŋ
 speak.IMP language 1 – 1SG.POSS
 “Speak in your language”

S: (in bàsàá): ñń mề jè-dzǒj lé Minsêm
 Alright 1SG be.PRES 5-name that Minsem
 “Ok, my name is Minsem”

S: (in bàsàá): mbáj j-êm lé ⁺Lépdzóm
 Village 7-2SG.POSS that Lepdjom
 “My village is called Lepdjom”

R (in bàsàá): pót ⁺hóp ⁺w - óŋ
 speak.IMP language 1 – 1SG.POSS
 “Speak in your language”

S: (in bàkòlà): mbùya ɲ - ǎ βê Léφdzó, dǔ
 Village 9-1SG.POSS PREST Lepdjom so
 mbúya ɲ-ǎ...
 village 9-1SG.POSS
 “My village is Lepdjom, so my village...”

ɖ -ínà ná Minsêm dǔ mbúya ɖ-ínà
 5-name that Minsem so village 5-name
 ná Léφdzó
 that Lepdjom
 “My name is Minsem ... the name of my village is
 Lepdjom”

Actually the researcher in the above excerpt is a bàsàá speaker himself and the recording session is taking place in a typical bàsàá-contact village called Ledjom. Every Bakola speaker of that village is also a perfect speaker of bàsàá, and some of the names they bear fall within the bàsàá onomastic system (e.g. *Ngoviii Minsem*). The dilemma that the Bakola speaker faces here is obviously that of deciding what is indeed is “his” language. The speech production situation which is characterized by the presence of bàsàá outsiders, calls in the

mind of the speaker for the functional choice of language which is more appropriate for the social context.

The generalized multilingualism embodied in the cultural life of Bakola people is therefore to be interpreted as a response to the functional needs of their social life, which is fundamentally grounded in permanent interaction, or rather in a patron-client relationship with the neighbours (Mufwene 2001). As their survival depends on the ability to constantly negotiate a living corner in this unequal relationship, language functionality tends to prevail over language status or even language life (Fishman 2001). For this reason, the researcher's insistent recalls to the Bakola speaker to come back to his language are nothing but ridiculous; they are prompted by the received myth of language ownership, as pointed out by (Fishman 2001:2):

The Western world has had a love affair with its own languages for over two centuries. Because of this love affair (the seeds of which the power and prestige of the West has also sown throughout much, if not most, of the world), it is easy to overstate the importance of language in human social and cultural affairs. Language is not the only important consideration in connection with the lives of peoples and nations, communities and regions. There are also demographic, economic, and geographic and yet other essentially co-occurring sociolinguistic factors that must be considered in the study of the determinants and consequences of the sociocultural priorities, values and behaviours of human collectivities. But because language is such a central ingredient in most of the foregoing, and because of the love affair with language mentioned earlier, language (specifically, a society's perceived "own" language) has been elevated to the stature of a prime consideration in the life of most human collectivities. In other words, we have made language into something even more important than it might otherwise have been in any case.

The liberal attitude of the Bakola concerning languages choice (from an "own language" perspective) in a given social context is even more widespread in language use, as reflected in the documentation records. One of the consequences being

that the search for any consistent primary data to serve a structural analysis (Himmelman 2010), i.e. a quest for a system of regularities to support descriptive statements or abstractedness, may arise from wrong expectations, or (which is even worse) result in artificial descriptive statements. Variation in pronunciation and lexical choice can be considerable even within the limits of an idiolect and in the course of the same speech context. Multilingualism among Bakola is not only a matter of a multiple supra languages ownership, but also a question of multiple “own dialects” within the macro sphere of a supra “own language”. It is not very certain that traditional methodologies of language description and analysis, which have developed against the binominal ideology of one language = one culture, and which have been the womb in which earlier language documentation works have been nurtured, have ever questioned the very pertinence of what a language is or should be.

6. Redefining our mindset

What exactly do we mean to save or safeguard when we intend to document a language? (Himmelman 2006:7) has proposed that ‘language documentation should contain a large corpus of data which provide evidence for the language(s) used at a given time in a given community.’ This “ecology” approach by Himmelman which focuses mostly on the actual language practices of a given community can be contrasted with the ancestral code approach, which targets something of the vanishing/threatened language that could reflect the pure nature of that language. Such a view has been generally described as reductive and nostalgic, and more focused on the researcher’s phantasm than on the real-time life of a given community. (Woodbury 2011:178) provides the following picture of this type of approach to language documentation:

Documentation of the ancestral code [...] selects as important from among all the speech in a community that speech which gives evidence of a feature of the past which may not persist long into the future, namely the ancestral code [...].

On the academic side, we may see linguistic reconstruction, or focus on the most traditional variant forms, as nostalgic tendencies, while purism and assertions of the linguistic code as intrinsic to ethnic or spiritual identity or traditionalism are forms of nostalgia in the popular sense.

Purism or traditionalism can be regarded as one end of the spectrum of language documentation practices, while (Himmelman's 2006) "ecology" approach^{ix} could stand at the other end. However, advocating for the record of "language(s) used at a given time in a given community" is not totally devoid of the view that languages are owned by specific corresponding communities, and that individuals have to fit into just one linguistic slot or, in the case of multilingualism, that they have to operate from distinct slots.

The idea that individual languages should overlap with individual human communities is so overwhelmingly present in our mindsets that it may be hard to think of languages as functionally emerging from the social situation rather than pre-existing to these social situations. Languages are diverse not only from a systemic point of view, but also from their internal dynamics, which in turn is dependent on the dynamics of historical, political, economic, demographic, geographic, social and psychological correlates. Language dynamics entails language change, the degree and scope of which are determined by the social needs of the community; and language change should not always be equated with language endangerment. The case of Bakola humbly teaches us that language dynamics and language change may be positive signs of language vitality. If languages are living entities, therefore from an evolutionary perspective, their chances to survive throughout history may depend on their ability to change and to adapt to new situations.

The work of language documentation that the Bakola project^x has undertaken for three years and which has enabled a multimedia recording of quantitatively and qualitatively important sample of cultural and linguistic material is indeed a valuable achievement for the Bakola community, the scientific world and the general public. It provides a unique opportunity

for the Bakola as a minority and marginalized group to gain some sort of visibility in a globalized and destructive environment (Fishman 2001), slight and tentative though this may be. Will this work ever serve future generations of Bakola to revitalize or to recover some form of an ancestral code? We have been brought to realize during the course of our documentation work, that this might perhaps never be the case. At this point in time, intergenerational transmission of Bakola language is systematically achieved and no case of a Bakola child not speaking the language of his parents has been observed or reported. Although multilingualism is a rule and a *sine qua non* condition for surviving the cultural pressure from the neighbouring communities, complete language shift is not yet attested. Endangerment applies so far to the social functions that the language used to perform in the cultural life of the community. Since some of the cultural activities are being abandoned under the pressuring effect of modern life, their disappearance undoubtedly diminishes the functional territory of the Bakola language.

The Bakola experience stresses the need to fit language documentation within the broader theory of language life and language death (Fisman 1991). This theory, which the author has “re-examined, refined and revised” later, ‘considers language illnesses and even language death *per se*, as just examples of varying degrees of severity of hitherto uncontrolled (largely because misunderstood) changes in the number and kinds of social functions for which particular languages are utilized at particular historical junctures.’

7. Conclusion

We return to the question of “what is the wrong language?” There are many fieldwork situations in which the data obtained will go against our preconceptions, and the results will “feel wrong.” However, the *real* “wrong language” would be a language description which follows our preconceptions and expectations rather than the actual facts of the data. The tradition of creating “essentialist” descriptions of languages is a

good one. Let us still, however, leave room for surprises to come along!

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ⁱThe Bakola Documentation project was funded in 2009 by the Volkswagenstiftung through the DOBES program. www.mpi.nl/DOBES/projects.

ⁱⁱThe name Bagyele has many other varieties and spellings: Bagiele, Bajele, Bajeli, Bako, Bakola, Bakuele, Bekoe, Bogyel, Bogyeli, Bondjiel, Giele, Gieli, Gyeli.

ⁱⁱⁱKwasio includes the dialects Mvumbo and Mabi.

^{iv}Nadine Grimm is currently writing her PhD thesis on the Bulu-influenced variety of Bakola, and Emmanuel Ngué Um is preparing a “sociolinguistic grammar” of the overall varieties of Bakola.

^vAll of the soldiers were asked to pronounce the word *Shibboleth*; those who pronounced the first consonant as [ʃ] were friends, those who pronounced as [s] were enemies and therefore killed at once (Judges: XII.6).

^{vi}Some Bakola specialists believe that the relationship between the Bakola and their neighbours differs from one group to another. According to Loung (1959) and NgimaMawoung (2001) Bakola have a stronger relationship with the Mvùmbò than they do with other groups such as Basaa, Bulu and Bakoko.

^{vii}The Bakola chief statement can be accessed via the following link: http://corpus1.mpi.nl/qfs1/media/archive/dobes_data/Bakola/Dialects/Basaa_contact_region/Bella/Interviews/Annotations/Interview1_Bella.eaf

^{viii}The prefix “Ngo” is typical of the bàsàá culture; it is a kinship particle attributed to girls to mean “the daughter of”

^{ix}Himmelman does not explicitly refer to the notion of ecology. In addition, this term, as used here, is different from the concept of ecology as implied in Good (2007).

^x Bakola Documentation project was funded in 2009 by the Volkswagenstiftung through the Dobes program.

One language or two? *Bom* and *Kim*, two highly endangered South Atlantic “languages”ⁱ

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Abstract

This paper presents data from two previously undescribed and highly endangered languages, Bom (bmf) and Kim (krm, a.k.a. Krim). The only speakers today are elderly individuals isolated from other speakers, sprinkled about the traditional Bom and Kim areas along the southern coast of Sierra Leone. No children are learning the languages nor indeed have any interest in speaking them. Despite the facts that the Bom and Kim peoples had recently (two generations ago) fought battles due to a land dispute, that they have their own paramount chiefs, and that they requested separate pedagogical materials, the Bom and Kim languages remain one and the same language, mutually intelligible with salient but minor differences in their lexicons and grammars. The literature, however, has not recognized the two as separate languages. The linguistic evidence presented here shows that the two constitute one and the same language, perhaps a set of points along a dialect continuum involving as yet unconsidered languages such as *Sherbro*. An obvious question asks whether we are often premature in offering characterizations and classifications, i.e., doing so on the basis of insufficient data. A further question raised by this paper asks whether our model of “language” and the ideology behind it need some examination, particularly in the African context.

1. Introduction

This paper partially characterizes both Bom (bmf) and Kim (krm), two previously undescribed languages.ⁱⁱ Both are highly endangered: Kim has fewer than fifteen speakers and Bom has

only a few hundred. The few elderly speakers of both languages are, for the most part, isolated from other speakers, as they are found in separate villages within the traditional Bom and Kim areas along the southern coast of Sierra Leone, as shown in Map 1 below. No children are learning the languages or indeed have any interest in speaking them, disparaging their languages as “monkey talk”; adults, especially Muslims, have characterized use of the language as “speaking to the devil”.

The two languages share the same phonology, much of their lexicon and much of their morphology, with a few syntactic differences. I will not discuss the structure of the verb phrase (VP), where most of those differences are found, especially within the context of the controversy regarding the S-Aux-O-V-X syntagm (Gensler 1997, Güldemann 2008), for that phenomenon forms the topic of another paper, Childs 2012b. This syntagm is highly variable within languages, especially moribund ones, as well as within Atlantic itself (Childs 2005). The syntactic differences, however, can be resolved into a question of morbidity – few Kim speakers are anything more than “semi-speakers” (Dorian 1977) or “rusty” speakers (Menn 1989). It is hard to say how much of the grammar they still control. Some of the Bom speakers, essentially a set of old women in a relatively large town (Sogbaleh), use the language on a regular basis, but Mende, an unrelated Mande language, is the language of everyday interaction and spoken by everyone. (Mende features the S-Aux-O-V-X syntagm exclusively.) These conditions have likely dulled the sharp formal distinctions of the original grammar (Childs 2012a). Undoubtedly, the two languages are dying and will disappear with the present generation; moreover, the language to which speakers have shifted (Mende) is typologically the opposite, in terms of its morphology and syntax, of the language they and their ancestors once knew (e.g., Wilson 1989).

Comparative evidence for Bom and Kim constituting the same language is adduced from *Mani* (Bullom So; buy), a closely related but much more vital language (Childs 2011), and from the more distantly related Kisi language (*ksq* and *kss*) (Childs 1995). This comparison reveals that even with regard to what could be construed as a differentiating feature, Bom and Kim

are still more alike than dissimilar, the differences more a product of how little the languages are used.

This paper will not consider sociolinguistic factors in any detail, important as they are for understanding the separate statuses and uses of the two languages (Childs, Good and Mitchell 2014). It is well known that non-linguistic factors can influence language attitudes, public perception, and policy decisions. Although this paper will mention such factors, the main focus will be on linguistic differences, how Bom and Kim are not linguistically distinct, and deciding whether or not the two constitute linguistically distinct languages.ⁱⁱⁱ

In making the claim that Bom and Kim constitute the same language, renamed 'Bom-Kim' in Childs (to appear), I in no way mean to disparage previous work, as represented in *Ethnologue* (Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2014), only to correct it since it is, in fact, the most widely referenced resource. It will be shown that there is ample evidence even within the tiny South Atlantic group of languages (N=15, the total number of languages is controversial) for questioning the *Ethnologue* treatment of not only the two focus languages but also other languages in the group. *Ethnologue* not only over-differentiates (practices excessive splitting resulting in the proliferation of languages) but also under-differentiates (practices excessive lumping, not seeing different languages where they should), basing themselves on incomplete and unreliable data with an incomplete identification of sources, whose methodology is unclear at best.

2. Language classification

This section introduces the relevant South Atlantic languages from the Bullom sub-group: Bom, Kim, Mani, and Kisi. It then compares the two focus languages (Bom and Kim) with some reference to the other Bullom languages to flesh out the similarities and differences between the two. Bullom forms a sub-group within Mel, which formerly belonged to the (West) Atlantic family of Niger-Congo. The higher grouping has recently undergone some rethinking (Wilson 1989, Childs 2001, Segerer 2001, Childs 2003, Blench 2006), and I follow

that rethinking in seeing South Atlantic as a separate branch of Niger Congo on a par with North Atlantic, formerly the Northern Branch of the Atlantic Group. Bijogo was once seen as an isolate but is now integrated within the Northern Branch (Segerer 2012). Below appears the current thinking on the classification of former (West) Atlantic.

(1) The tripartite classification of (West) Atlantic, a sub-group of Niger-Congo

North Atlantic (new name proposed, “Atlantic” (Segerer 2012)): Wolof, Seereer, etc., including **Bijogo**, an isolate, recently integrated into Bak, an established genetic group within North Atlantic (Segerer 2012)

South Atlantic, former Southern Branch (see Figure 13.1 below)

Languages within the South Atlantic grouping are shown below in Figure 13.1 (following *Ethnologue*’s nomenclature for the most part). Common names, when different from the names used here, and ISO codes are given in parentheses after each language. Extinct languages are not shown. Languages in bold are the names of the languages discussed or mentioned below.

South Atlantic

1. Mel languages

Temne (tem), Pukur (Baga Binari; bcg), Baga Manduri (bmd), Baga Tchitem

(Sitemu, bsp), Lɔŋitɛ (Baga Fore, Mbulungish; mbv), Landoma (Kogoli; ldm)

Bullom languages: **Kisi** (considered two languages by *Ethnologue*: Northern Kisi

(kqs) and Southern Kisi (kss); **Mani** (Bullom So, Mmani; buy); Sherbro (bun); **Bom**

(bmf); and **Kim** (Krim; krm) Gola (gol)

2. Limba (considered two languages by *Ethnologue*: East Limba (lma) and West-Central Limba (lia))

3. Mansoanka (Sua, msw)

South Atlantic classification (Childs 2004, Voeltz 1996)

This classification is controversial, as recently discussed by (Pozdniakov & Segerer 2012). Pozdniakov proposes that Sua, Gola, Limba, and Mansoanka should be excluded from South Atlantic, thus leaving only Temne-Baga and the Bullom languages within the sub-group. This reorganization in no way affects the closeness of the languages within Bullom, the topic of the discussion here.

3. Where Bom and Kim are spoken

Map 1 shows where the two varieties are spoken today^{iv} by a limited number of isolated and elderly residents of the towns shown below. The map may be deceptive in that a town coded as Bom or Kim could have only one elderly speaker, as was the case in a number of instances.

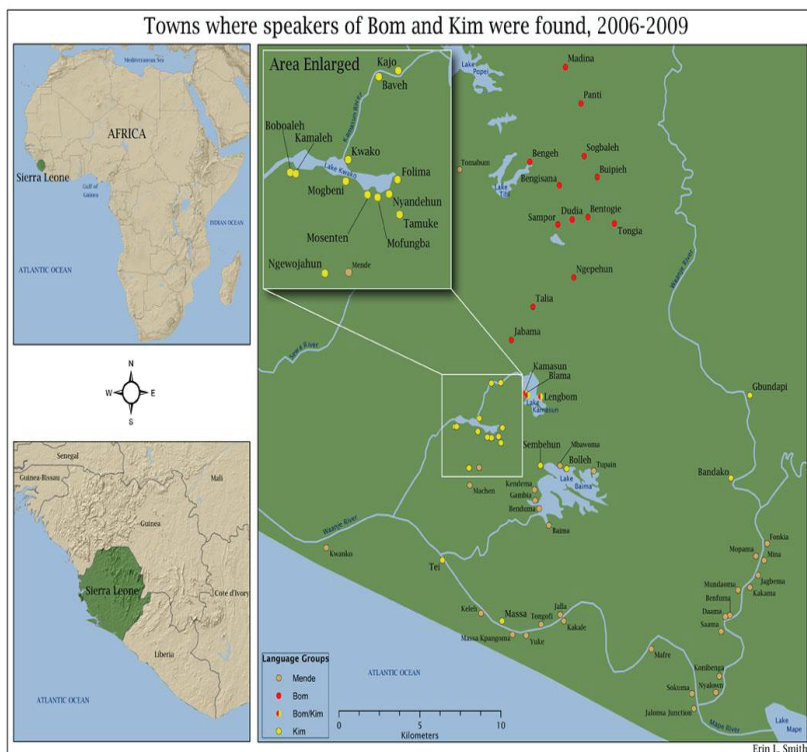


Figure 13.1: Location of Bom and Kim speakers

Figure 13.1: Map showing where the two varieties are spoken today.

What one can see from this map is the clustering of Kim speakers around Lake Kwako; the greatest concentration was in the twin villages of Nyandehun-Tamuke. Bom speakers were found further north, perhaps in an area extending even further north than is shown on this map.

I now consider current characterizations of the two languages, finding the available characterizations to be misleading and even inaccurate. *Ethnologue* is the most widely referenced source for information on languages of the world but when evaluated against recent field experience seems at the least out of date. This evaluation is not directed at *Ethnologue* in particular but more generally at the state of research on African languages. Although this discussion represents a single case study dealing only with a small group of languages, I expect the findings of similarly detailed work, especially undocumented languages, will reveal other weaknesses in our standard reference. On the basis of this analysis, *Ethnologue* quite simply cannot be regarded as a reputable source for information on the status of Bom and Kim and likely on the status of other languages and groups as well.

4. *Ethnologue* descriptions

The focus now turns to the two languages themselves, Bom and Kim. I begin by evaluating the descriptions in *Ethnologue*, far and away the most widely referenced resource (Lewis et al. 2014). I start with Bom.

(2) Bom in the online version of *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al. 2014)

ISO 639-3:

Alternate Names: Bome, Bomo, Bum

Population: 5,580 (2006), decreasing.

Location: Along Bome river.

Language Status: 6b (Threatened).^v

Classification: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Southern, Mel, Bullom-Kissi, Bullom, Northern

Dialects: Lexical similarity: 66%–69% with Sherbro [bun] dialects, 34% with Sherbro [bun] dialects, 34% with Krim [krm].

Language Use: Shifting to Mende [men].

Language Resources: OLAC resources in and about Bom

Other Comments: Traditional religion.

The source of information for the Bom entry is not given (the OLAC link provides no further information), and the accuracy of the information is highly questionable at best. What may be correct is the name of the language (not true for “Krim”) but not much else. Although the number of speakers is certainly decreasing and they are shifting (have already shifted!) to Mende, the number of speakers: “5,580 (2006)” is wildly high with the source unnamed; I found only a few hundred elderly speakers during a survey conducted over the period 2007-10. Another questionable fact is the location of the speakers of Bom “Along Bome River”, a river name that appears on no maps, though it possibly could be the Sewa River, on the basis of a much earlier reference.

Bum, which is a name for the River Bum (Sewa [Note 2: Sewa is the Mende name for the same river.]) [see Map 1 above], is potentially a contraction of Bullom (Koelle 1854: 2). (Corcoran In preparation).

‘Bom’ has been claimed to be an earlier (non-Mende) name for the river and perhaps the source of the name for the language (Hall 1938, probably based on Koelle 1854). Today, however, Bom speakers are found not along the river but in isolated villages to the west and south of the Sewa River (see Map 1). A plausible explanation for the identification of a language distinct from Kim is the name of the river; the language is not even mentioned in the Kim entry. Thus, we see some confusion and inaccuracies in the characterization of Bom. The Kim entry is not much better; it appears below.

(3) Kim in the online *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al. 2014)

ISO 639-3: krm

Alternate Names: Kim, Kimi, Kirim, Kittim

Population: 500 (1990 Christian Reformed Church). Ethnic population: 11,700 (2006).

Location: Coast between Sherbro [bun] and Vai [vai] language areas, along Krim River.

Language Maps: Sierra Leone

Language Status: 6a (Vigorous).

Classification: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Southern, Mel, Bullom-Kissi, Bullom, Southern

Dialects: None known. Lexical similarity: 44%–45% with Sherbro [bun], 34% with Northern Bullom [buy].

Language Use: All ages. Being absorbed into the Mende [men] group. Also use Sherbro [bun].

Language Resources: OLAC resources in and about Krim

Other Comments: Traditional religion, Muslim.

As for the Kim entry, a good beginning is to discuss the name ‘Krim’. First of all, there is no phoneme /r/ in the language. Secondly, there are few consonant clusters, even with the existing liquid /l/. The population of 500 as the number of speakers in 1990 does not seem impossible (Pichl 1972), but what is the “ethnic population” and how would it be counted? Ethnicity is a highly problematic concept in West Africa, and the links between language and culture are negotiable (Lüpke 2013). Does the number include the 500 speakers?

The characterization of the language as “vigorous” is simply wrong. This is a more vital ranking than for Bom! Later in the description it is stated that the language is used by “all ages” – yet we found no children who spoke the language, in fact, no one under fifty. The youngest person we found was probably in her late fifties or even sixties. One must also note that everyone speaks Mende, so linguistically the language has been completely absorbed; finally we found no use of Sherbro. Curiously, there is no mention of the Bom language. Perhaps it’s the case that the two languages were confounded and therefore combined by their analyst, just as I am suggesting should be done here.

One difference from the earlier description of Kim (Lewis 2009) is the listed source for the number of speakers (Population). In the earlier version it was ‘Vanderaa 1991’; here it is ‘1990 Christian Reformed Church’. The numbers are the same, so the change in reference is curious, especially in that the references seem to be related. I was not able to track down the second reference, ‘1990 Christian Reformed Church’, but

the first reference is given fully expanded below and is suspiciously close to the 'newer' reference.

Vanderaa, L. (1991). *A survey for Christian reformed world missions of mission churches in West Africa*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christian Reformed World Missions.

This source says little about the methodology or the data but much about the glory of God. The OLAC resources are more extensive than for Bom but oddly list resources for 'Khinalug', a Caucasian language documented by Josh Gippert, as part of the entry.

The stipulated location is similarly flawed, "Coast between Sherbro [bun] and Vai [vai] language areas along Krim River". The Krim River is even more mysterious than the Bome River and does not appear on any maps I have seen, e.g., ITMB 2001, the most accurate and up-to-date map of Sierra Leone.^{vi} Although the Kim-speaking area was once much more extensive, e.g., Jones 1983, perhaps similar to the area indicated by the *Ethnologue* description, today it is all Mende(-speaking) and has been so for some time. The few speakers of Kim we were able to find lived, for the most part around Lake Kwako, as shown in map 1.

What seems to be a more reliable resource with an explicit methodology (not stated here) is Iverson and Cameron 1986, based on an survey conducted by workers for the Institute of Sierra Leone Languages (TISLL, a Lutheran organization). It was an avowedly sociolinguistic survey, investigating language attitudes, but also considered language relatedness using a word list of 132 words. They consider Mani (their "BullomSo"), Sherbro, and Kim (their "Krim") to be three separate languages all belonging to Bullom. Notably they didn't mention Bom. Perhaps they considered it a part of Kim? They already found Kim to be moribund with everyone speaking Mende.

In summary, the *Ethnologue* descriptions for both Bom and Kim are at best badly out of date and misleading – at worst entirely spurious. The most egregious error, however, is recognizing the two as separate languages. Now that the unreliability of extant sources has been shown, I will say something about the socio-historical background of the two

languages; the final step is to show some of their linguistic similarities between Bom and Kim.

5. Socio-historical background

Without much more than oral history and a few archaeological records, it is difficult to determine the history of many parts of Africa (Blench 2006), specifically the date at which groups separated. On the basis of known historical events and climate change, the separation of the Kisi from the Bullom stock occurred in the 16th century, at the time of the Mane Invasions (Rodney 1970, Brooks 1993). The Mani, the next most closely related group separated much later; according to oral history they became isolated at least five generations ago as the Temne and others advanced (Childs 2011). No physical or cultural barrier separates the Bom and the Kim; even the Sherbro have coterminous borders, although several chiefdoms are found on Sherbro Island across a narrow waterway.

Nonetheless, the Kim and Bom people generally would self-identify, at least to project members, as belonging to one of the two ethnicities, even when not speaking the language. Furthermore, there are chiefdom boundaries, some organic but most created by colonial or current governments. A number of Kim chiefdoms were amalgamated in colonial times, and the Kim area was historically much more extensive than the Bom area, which consists of only a single chiefdom. They have fought over land in recent times, according to some sources, but it was not a dispute enlisting whole chiefdoms on either side. Many of the towns had mixed populations, and people said to be Bom speakers actually spoke Kim and vice versa.

For the Kim, especially those concentrated in the twin towns of Mosenten-Kamasun, Kim is the language spoken by their parents and the language they grew up hearing, although most no longer speak it. Significantly, only one person (Fasia Kolia, an elderly woman in Kamasun) was remarked to speak Mende with a Kim accent. Thus even the oldest surviving generation grew up speaking Mende.

For the Bom the language is more vital, though hardly ‘vigorous’. Older people had no trouble conversing in Bom with their peers and even some middle-aged people could speak the language when the circumstances were right. Virtually all fluent speakers were elderly, however, and many did not have an opportunity to use the language, though several could tell stories, converse, and sing songs in Bom. The differences between the two languages and cultures may be more artefactual and historical than based on any real linguistic and cultural differences.

Two anecdotes suggest the overlapping if not the shared linguistic and socio-cultural features of the two languages and their speakers. As part of the documentation effort, the DKB research group sought to record speech events of many sorts, including songs. At one recording session in Kamasun (see Map 1), we were lucky enough to record what we were told were traditional Kim songs sung by five elderly women, who were soon joined by a few male musicians and singers and by every small child in town. One of the singers, Yema Kangayo, I had recorded as a Bom speaker and was thus puzzled to see her there. No one else was surprised for she spoke Kim they said and knew all the songs. Two points can be made about this incident. First of all, songs and probably other genres were shared across “linguistic” boundaries, and, secondly, there might not be any linguistic boundaries between Bom and Kim.

The second anecdote features a star Kim speaker, featured also in the first documentation of Kim (Pichl 1972).^{vii} Pa Seku Abdullai Will (deceased 2006, age 92), a key contributor to the documentation effort, crowed that he could speak all of the local languages, in addition to Krio, Mende, and English. The local languages here were Kim, Bom, and Sherbro, all likely representing points on a continuum.

In sum, Bom is more socio-culturally alive than Kim but both languages pale in terms of vitality when compared even to Mani, another dying language, and even more so when compared to Kisi, a still vital language. In fact, the question of whether Kim and Bom are distinct languages will become moot in a few years because their speakers will have disappeared.

Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to establish on what linguistic basis their shared identity can be based.

6. Bom and Kim compared

The comparison I make between the two languages is limited but provides a representative snapshot of the similarities and differences between the two languages.

(4) Areas to be compared:

Lexicon: basic vocabulary (localized to West Africa);

Phonology: phonemic inventory, phonological rules;

Morphology: noun class system, verbal morphology, verb extensions;

Phrasal syntax: noun phrase, verb phrase, adpositional phrase;

1. The lexicon

Comparing basic vocabulary shows that the two languages are virtually identical, and in fact¹ some of the differences represent dialect differences. For example, what is shown in (5) below as the Bom way of pronouncing ‘sister’ with a voiced velar fricative was a pronunciation used by a number of Kim speakers.

(5) A comparison of some basic vocabulary

	Kim / Bom		Kim / Bom		Kim / Bom
Three	gaa / ɣa	mother	yaa / yaa	sun	pan / pan
Four	hiɔn / hiyɔn	father	ba / ba	moon	pahin / paan
Five	nuen / men	sister	-wa / wan-	star	lei / lee
ten ^{viii}	wan / waan	brother	pihain / pɛn-	rain	hɔye / hue
Child	-pum / -pum	wind	hinin / hin	pestle	tun / tun
Fire	jɛm / jɛm	rice	pɛɛ / pɛɛ	hoe	kaa / kaa
Stick	tɔk / tok	cassava	yeg / yege	knife	kɛn / kɛn
Leaf	pɔm / pɔm	meat	wuse / wusi	axe	bela / bela
Grass	tɛtɛg / tɛtɛg	pepper	kefe / kefe	mortar	ye / ye
Ground	ɛ / ɛ	palm wine	mui / mui	money	fe / fe

Thus, on the basis of this snapshot of the lexicons of the two languages, there is little to differentiate the two in terms of basic vocabulary.

2. Phonemic inventory, phonology

The phonemic inventories of Bom and Kim differ in no significant way and differ little from areally common inventories, forming a relatively modal phonemic inventory (Maddieson 1984) with the addition of a prenasalized series, as illustrated in Table . There is a voiced labialvelar stop in addition to four pairs of stops contrasting in voicing at different places of articulation, several voiceless fricatives, a liquid, and two glides. The feature [nasal] is important for both a series of nasals (at four places of articulation) and a series of prenasalized stops, as well as for several regular phonological processes. The sounds in parentheses represent peripheral phonemes, i.e., sounds of limited distribution.

Orthographic conventions follow the general Africanist practice: “ny” represents the palatal nasal [ɲ]; “c” and “j” are the affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ].

	Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar	Labial vel.	Glottal
Nasals	m	n	ny	ŋ		
Stops	p b	t d	c j	k g	gb	
Pre-nasal.	(mp) mb	nt nd	(nyj)	ŋk ŋg		
Fricatives	f (v)	s				h/ħ
Liquids		l				
Glides			j		w	

Table 13.1: Consonant inventory

The vowel inventory features a symmetrical seven-vowel system, three front and back pairs, with only the low vowel /a/ being unpaired. Length is contrastive for the monophthongs but not for the four diphthongs, which pattern phonologically with long vowels. The one non-IPA orthographic convention in the representation of vowels is the symbol “a” for IPA [ɑ]. Following general Africanist practice once again and avoiding diacritics, I have represented short vowels with a single symbol, e.g., “e”, and long vowels with a double symbol “ee”.

	i						u	
		e				o		Diphthongs: ɔi, ai, ui, uɛ, ua
			ɛ		ɔ			
				a				

Table 13.2: Vowel inventory

Unconditioned alternations between front and back vowels occur, especially with the higher vowels, e.g., *bami/bamu* “my father”, *gben/gbon* “finish”. (Such alternations are found in other closely related languages within the Bulom sub-group, e.g., Kisi (Childs 1995, 2000) and Mani (Childs 2011).) Other alternations in vowel quality occur, e.g., *bɛsi-* “broom” and *basi* “sweep”, *ye/ya* “dance”, and *can/cengi* “pass”, yet none with any systematicity. In contrast to the situation in Bom and Kim, such alternations in Kisi have grammatical significance, e.g., the vowel [a] changes to [e] when verbs with the vowel [a] are negated. There are also two epenthetic vowels, [i] and sometimes [ə] which break up consonant clusters at word boundaries.

Syllable structure is CV(V)(C) where only the liquid /l/ and nasals are allowed in syllable codas. The distribution differs slightly at the ends of the words, where only nasals are allowed, except for the palatal nasal. Only nasals can be syllabic at the beginning of words, always before a homorganic stop. Onset “strengthening” occurs when a word ends in a nasal and precedes a word beginning with [l]. In this environment the [l] changes to [d], as also occurs in the related languages Mani and Kisi. In some cases no [l] need be present for the [d] to appear, e.g., *jèndàgbèn ~ jèndàgbèndí* two alternatives for “story”. Other notable segmental changes in both Bom and Kim involve intervocalic “weakening”, particularly with regard to the voiced velar stop: [g] alternates with [ɣ] and [w] and even with “0” in some cases. The liquid [l] often disappears in this position as well. Occasionally an (optional) epenthetic [i] will occur at the end of words with a final closed syllable, e.g., *gbahun(i)* “door” (cf. ‘story’ above).

As mentioned above when discussing the consonantal inventory, nasality functions prominently in the phonology. In

addition to using [nasal] as a contrastive feature, Bom and Kim have notable processes of anticipatory vowel nasalization when a coda is filled with a nasal, heaviest when the nasal is the velar nasal [ŋ] and the vowels are low (see Ohala 1975). In addition, vowels are heavily nasalized after [h] (“rhinoglottophilia” in Matisoff 1975) and even pharyngealized, particularly the low vowel [a] and the diphthong [ai]. I list below the shared phonological processes.

(6) Phonological rules shared by Bom and Kim:

Onset strengthening (see (17) below)

$l \rightarrow 0 / V _ V$

$V \rightarrow [+nasal] / _ N$

$V \rightarrow [+nasal] / h _$ (Note: V sometimes pharyngealized or glottalized, i.e., $V^?$ or V^h)

$CVV \rightarrow CGV$

With regard to prosody, lexical tone can be reconstructed for South Atlantic, yet Bom-Kim retains little evidence of such marking. Only a few inflectional morphemes, e.g., the negative marker, and some particles, e.g., the definite article, show the trace of what was probably once a high tone.

Note that both show the results of a diachronic rule changing final $l > n / _ \#$, a rule differentiating the two languages from Sherbro, Mani, and Kisi (first remarked in Pichl 1964).

1. Word categories – personal pronouns

Personal pronouns differ in no significant ways. Table shows the personal pronouns shared between the languages. Note that the variation in the 1sg object and possessive pronouns occurs in both languages and is phonologically conditioned by the structure of the preceding syllable.

	Subject	Object	Possessive	Emphatic
1SG	ya, a	mi, -(i)m	mi, -(i)m	yaŋ, yan
2SG	n, mu, hu(m)	mu	mu	mun
3SG	wɔ, ɔ	wɔ	wɔ	wɔn, wɔŋ
1PL	yi, (h)i	(h)i	(h)i	hin
2PL	Ha	nu, hum	nu	han
3PL	(h)a	ha	(h)a	han

Table 13.3: Personal pronouns

Morphology

Because of the moribund state of both languages, the data for the morphological systems may be somewhat unreliable. Nonetheless, on the basis of what we were able to document, the two systems are similar if not identical.

Noun classes

One can see that the noun classes closely correspond. (The numbers are used only to facilitate comparison.) Bom has one more class than Kim, likely due to the difference in vitality between the two languages. Kim speakers committed many errors in agreement and both changed their productions and produced different forms on different occasions; thus the data for Kim are somewhat suspect (Childs 2009b).

	Name	Pronoun	Marker	Some examples
	wɔ	wɔ, ɔ	0	3SG PRO; all animate entities
	Ha	(h)a	a-	3PL PRO; all wɔ-class plurals
	Hu	hu	0	many inanimates, default sg
	Hi	hi	i-	hair, name, moon, sand, many collectives, plurals
	ta	ta	ta-	default plural
	si	ha	si-	eggs, bones, horns, tails, ears, hearts, animal plurals
	ma	ma	n-	liquids, etc.
	ti	ti	ti-	egg, eye, sg body parts?

Table 13.4: The noun classes of Bom

	Name	Pronoun	Marker	Some examples
	wɔ	wɔ, ɔ	0	3SG PRO; animates
	a	(h)a	a-	3PL PRO; pl animates
	hi	(h)i	i-	default sg
	ta	ta	ta-	inanimate pl
	si	si	si-	animal pl
	ma	ma	n-	liquids, collectives

Table 13.5: The noun classes of Kim

Because of the moribund state of the two languages, one is hesitant to make too many claims on the basis of the data elicited and recorded. Nonetheless, the correspondences are striking in terms of both form and content.

Verbal morphology – TMAP

Verbal distinctions, primarily aspectual, are generally signaled by pre- and post-verbal particles. The Perfective (here called “Compleitive” to contrast more sharply with “Perfect”), however, is marked by a high-toned suffix -é. The Habitual features the simple verb with no inflection, although there is a change in word order when pronominal objects are present. Comparison with closely related Mani suggests there was once a tonal aspect marker on the pronoun.

The display in (7) shows the structure of the verbal complex. The two varieties have slight differences between them and some variation. The forward slash “/” separates a Bom form from a Kim form where the two differ. The languages differ in the form of the pre-verbal tense marker and in the form of the pre-verbal aspect marker. Kim has no post-verbal aspect marker, which may be an innovation or more likely a relic in Bom. The tilde “~” separates alternates within a given language.

(7) The verbal complex in Bom and Kim

PRO	(TENSE)	(ASPECT)	Verb	(ASPECT)	(ASPECT)
<i>ka/na</i>	<i>ge/go~gon</i>	0	-é	0 / <i>ge~go~gon</i>	(Bom)
Past	Progressive	Habitual	Completive	Perfect	

batinuwe wɔ na ge bɛmpa tɛɛŋɛ.

batnu -ɛ wɔ na ge bɛmpa tɛɛŋɛ

farmer DEF 3SG PST PROG make platform

‘The farmer was making a bird-driving platform.’ (Kim)

Imperatives optionally feature a second person pronoun, and the verb has a high tone or accent on the first syllable of the verb.

(8) Imperatives (2SG) Verb (...)

a. hún!

‘Come!’

b. (n) gbási yege logi!

(n) gbasi yege Logi

2SG cut cassava This

‘Chop up this cassava!’

The languages form the Imperative in exactly the same way.

1. Negation

Following Africanist tradition I include negation as a part of the verbal morphology. Negation is generally signaled by a floating high tone and an alveolar nasal suffixed to a tensed element. Note how the object *fe* ‘money’ has no article in (9). This is one of the few environments where nouns can appear without an article.

(9) Negation: -'n suffixed to verb or auxiliary (Bom and Kim)

ya bilén fe

ya cén kɔ

ya bil -é 'n fe
1SG Have CMP NEG money
'I have no money.'

ya ce 'n kɔ
1SG AUX -NEG go
'I am not going.'

The Imperative, however, is negated with a pre-verbal particle *ma*, which can also be used to negate nominal elements. Several speakers insisted on a final particle *wɛ* in the Negative Imperative, as featured in (10) below.

(10) The Imperative negated (Bom and Kim)

ma (n) gbási yege lɛ wɛ.

ma (n) gbási yege lɛ wɛ
NEG (2SG) cut cassava DEF PRT
'Don't cut up the cassava!'

(11) Nominal elements negated with the negator *ma*

bɛpɔgi logi, ha ga kakpa ma wɔ go

bɛpɔgi logi ha ka kakpa ma wɔ go

Chieftdom this 3PL PST vote NEG 3SG PFT

'This chieftdom has voted (to remove) (not) him.' (B27.8)

The last example comes from Bom but could equally well have come from Kim.

Verbal morphology – verb extensions

In both languages it is likely that the present system of verb extensions represents a reduced version of what once existed. In other closely related languages the system is much more robust. Both of the languages have a limited number of verb extensions, only one of which, the Instrumental, is currently productive, surviving perhaps because it has been reanalyzed as a preposition, along the lines of Mende, the language to which everyone has shifted, a highly analytic language. Other possible verb extensions are the Causative and Middle. The

expected Benefactive is commonly expressed analytically by means of a preposition *la* ‘for, on behalf of’. With extensions following roots, this part of the verbal complex follows the Proto-Niger-Congo pattern of the “inflectional verb” as outlined in Nurse 2007, 2008, an amazingly stable pattern (cf., Hyman 2014).

(12) Instrumental *-ka* [ga]

ha bɛmpaga blɔkile isunndɛ.

ha bɛmpa -ka blɔk lɛ i-sun lɛ
3PL make INSTR block DEF NCM-sand DEF
‘They make blocks with sand.’ (Bom)

ha bɛmpa soima- ha bɛmpa ga sope.

ha bɛmpa soi ma ha bɛmpa ga sop-ɛ
3PL make SoapNCP 3PL make with soap-DEF
They make soap that- they make (it) from soda. (Kim)

The example in (13) shows *ka* as a separate word after the direct object, clearly a preposition.

(13) a kɔn kɛti tɔgile ka gbɛlale.

a kɔn kɛti tɔgi lɛ ka bɛla lɛ
1SG go cut tree DEF with axe DEF
‘I cut the tree with the axe.’ (B24.38)

The causative is not productive but is suggested by verbs with a final *-i* and causative meaning.

(14) Causative *-i*

ha ga ce go hini ntɔpɔlɛ.

ha Ka ce go hin -i n- tɔpɔ lɛ
2PL PST AUX PROG lie -CSN CM- rat.trap DEF
‘Were you laying rat traps?’ (Bom) [cf. *hin* ‘lie down, rest’]

Only a few forms suggest the presence of a Middle extension.

(15) Middle *-n*

hi ɡɔ tɔn pue ɡo.

hi kɔ tɔ-n pue ɡo
 1PL go wash-MID waterside at
 'We go bathe at the waterside.' (Bom) [cf. *tɔ* 'wash' e.g., clothes]

5. Phrasal syntax

(a) The noun phrase

The most salient difference between the two languages is the form of the definite article, a form which appears in a much wider distribution than the definite article in English. There is no indefinite article in either language. Nouns appear without an article in very few contexts, and is likely the source of suffixed noun class markers (Childs 1983). Because it is of such frequent occurrence, it is remarked on and considered to be one way in which the two languages are different. The article appears at the end of the NP and cliticizes to the preceding element, conditioning some phonetic changes.

(16) The definite article: *lɛ* in Bom and *ɛ* in Kim

isag ilɛ 'fish traps' (B)

kɔta	dintɛlɛ	'white cloth' (B)
kɔta	dintɛ-lɛ	
cloth	white-DEF	

ɡbigita	ɡbomdɛ	'big butt' (B)
ɡbigi	ta-ɡbom-lɛ	
buttocks	NCM-large-DEF	

mangue 'mango' (K)

jo ɡwɛ 'food' (K)

Jo	ku-ε	
Food	NCM-DEF	
cegum	waiye	‘my bad character’ (K)
ce-ku-m	wai-ε	
character-NCM-POSS	bad-DEF	

Because of the phonologies of the two languages, there can be considerable variation in surface forms and even in the ε/ɛ contrast, namely, the variable rule deleting [l] intervocalically. The change focused on here, however, causes the liquid in Bom to become a voiced (prenasalized) stop when preceded by a nasal in the preceding word, and an epenthetic [d] appears before the onset-less Kim article. The allomorphy is laid out below.

(17) Allomorphs of the definite article

	Bom	Kim	
/ V [-long] ____	lε	ε	preceding V will glide in Kim
/ V [+long] [-rnd] ____	lε	yε	
/ V [+long] [+rnd] ____	lε	wε	
/ N ____	(n)dε	(n)dε	

The Kim definite article may be analyzed as underlyingly /ε/ with allomorphs [(n)dε], [yε], and [wε] predictable by rule. These phonological rules are operant elsewhere in the grammar, are phonetically plausible, and are found in other closely related languages, e.g., Kisi and Mani. The Bom definite article may similarly be analyzed as /ɛ/ with allomorphs of [lε] and [(n)dε]. Note that a rule deleting the intervocalic liquid has operated historically and remains as an optional synchronic rule in both Bom and Kim, revealing the historical relatedness of the two forms.

The syntax of the noun phrase also reveals the close relatedness of the two languages. There is no difference between the two. Nouns are prefixed with their noun class markers and followed by dependent elements prefixed by noun class pronouns and followed by the definite article.

(18) The noun phrase in Kim and Bom: (NCM-) noun (NCP-POSS ...) –DEF

Kim	mpanti	mwi		‘your work’
	n-pant	ma-mu-ε		
	NCM-work	NCP-2SG-DEF		
Bom	ndugi	mamule		‘your elbow’
	n-dugi	ma-mu	lε	
	NCM-elbow	NCP-POSS	DEF	

(b) Adpositional phrases

The two varieties differ as to where the adposition *ko/go* is found: before the object in Kim and after the object in Bom. When it is before the object, as in Kim, the object can be followed by a more specific postposition further identifying the relation of the object to the verb.

(19) Adpositional phrases

a. Kim ya kwɛn kɔn ko teiɔn.
 ya kwɛn kɔn ko tei ɔn
 1SG tomorrow go to Tei In
 ‘Tomorrow I will go to Tei.’ (Kim)

b. Bom i hin lɛɛ go
 Hi hin lɛɛ go
 1PL lie.down ground on
 ‘We slept on the ground.’ (Bom)

pɛ ga gbem wɔɔ | bɛngɛ go.
 pɛ ka gbem wɔ bɛngɛ go
 they PST bore 3SG Bɛngɛh in
 ‘My father was born in Bɛngɛh.’ (B19.1)

Most adpositions precede their object, e.g., *la* ‘for’.

Conclusion

In summary, there are few linguistic differences between Bom and Kim in terms of the lexicon, the phonology, and the morphosyntax. In a short paper such as this I have been selective in presenting the comparators but they are representative (Childs To appear contains more details). Once again, my purpose is not to highly criticize the most widely known and popular language reference service per se, but rather to point out some of the problems that arise in language characterization and classification when languages are insufficiently researched. Determining whether or not two languages are the same or different, for example, takes a lot more work than has been done in many parts of Africa. 'Linguists should not be afraid to say 'we don't know (and perhaps never will).' This "agnostic" approach is justified by the current linguistic situation across the world, with languages dying quicker than anyone can record them' (Aikhenvald and Dixon 2001:11).

Because of previous work, documentation project members working on Bom and Kim in the field first assumed that the languages were distinct but were then struck by how similar the two languages were. We were perhaps misled by the fact that some of the most common everyday words such as greetings and the definite article were different, and thus we assumed the languages were different. This may have been intentional on the part of the speakers (see Childs 2009a). Only when I came to work on the grammars of the two languages did I come to the conclusion that the languages were too similar to be treated separately. That the languages are different from the other Bullom languages is not surprising because of the shift to Mende, a language distinct from the other languages being shifted to. Mani speakers are shifting to Soso, a core Mandeng language, and Temne, another Atlantic language.

The two groups are thought to be geographically separate, perhaps because of chiefdom boundaries. Nonetheless, despite the land dispute,^{ix} different paramount chiefs, and requesting separate pedagogical materials, the Bom and Kim languages remain mutually intelligible with salient but minor differences

in their constitution. Although it is not an unambiguous answer to the question of whether the two varieties constitute one or two languages (local ideologies are also significant, as we have seen above), the conclusion here is that on a linguistic basis they constitute one and the same language, perhaps a set of points along a dialect continuum. The next research initiative will examine Sherbro, a variety coterminous with Bom, and perhaps other named varieties, e.g., Sei, to evaluate whether these other varieties also form part of this continuum or should be better regarded as separate varieties.

The treatment of these two languages and of this small group is symptomatic of how research on the continent has been conducted and how it can be criticized, e.g., Dixon 1997. Researchers have prematurely identified languages perhaps guided by the experience with European languages and nationalistic ideologies (Storch 2013). The question raised is whether our model of “language” and the ideology behind it need some examination (Lüpke and Storch 2013). Is it positivism or worse that drives us to differentiate what should not be differentiated? Why Bom and Kim were originally described as distinct languages? Treating them as distinct may be doing a disservice to the extant facts. How do we treat a dialect continuum? How do we represent multilingualism? How important is cultural identity or ethnicity and language ideology as opposed to a language spoken and its linguistic details? Such questions cannot be answered here but are certainly worth thinking about.

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ⁱMany thanks to the Bom and Kim peoples of the Bum and Kwamebai Chiefdoms, to the research team of the DKB, and to personnel at Fourah Bay College, all in Sierra Leone. The research was supported by National Science Foundation Grant No. 0652137 and by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Programme Major Documentation Project 0167.

ⁱⁱPlease note that I use the word “languages” here not to prejudice the answer to the central question considered in this paper but rather because of tradition and expository ease.

ⁱⁱⁱPichl may have suspected that Bom might be a dialect of Kim or Sherbro (the text is unclear, Pichl 1964) but never followed up on that suspicion, despite publishing a sizeable work on Kim (Pichl 1972).

^{iv}The survey was begun in 2007 and was updated throughout the project, which concluded in 2010. During the course of the project five speakers of Kim died (we found a total of fifteen speakers), three of them the strongest speakers we encountered.

^vOn the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), “6b (Threatened)” means “The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users” (Lewis and Simons 2010). The scale is admittedly dependent on the criterion of intergenerational transmission.

^{vi}Could it possibly be the Kittam River, more of a tidal estuary, into which both the Sewa and Waanjeflow? This guess is predicated on the basis of the alternate names given for Kim in the *Ethnologue* entry, one of which is “Kittim”. If so, the positioning of the Kim is even more bizarre.

^{vii}This may be the source of the “Krim” spelling of the language name, which all other speakers pronounced [kim]. Pa ShekuAbdullai Will pronounced the language’s name [kɾim], a pronunciation I heard from no other Kim speaker.

^{viii}The number system is five- and twenty-based (quinary-vigesimal) in both languages.

^{ix}The land dispute mentioned above between the Bom and Kim peoples was actually a more localized confrontation than suggested. The “land” was a cassava-farming area on the north side of Lake Kamasun, around which were many “mixed” towns, where both Bom and Kim speakers could be found. As I found out later, the “battle”, involved a lot of threatening behaviors rather than much physical contact. Thus, ideology may have driven the perception of differences between the two groups.

Multiple dialects standardisation in Cameroon: Promoting linguistic rights or language endangerment?

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Abstract

Language standardisation and the promotion of linguistic rights are indisputably very closely related concepts. However, quite often, standardisation results in linguistic fragmentation with mutually intelligible and historically related dialects being developed as independent languages thus raising concerns about the ability of standardisation to fully guarantee the linguistic rights of their speakers. This is particularly the case in minority settings such as Africa where language and ethnicity are employed to foster socio-cultural, economic and political marginalisation. Clearly, standardisation in these contexts, by encouraging artificial multiplication of languages, renders languages which are already endangered by virtue of their minority status more marginalised and vulnerable.

In this study, we address the issue of multiple dialects standardisation in Cameroon against a linguistics rights framework. We argue that standardising several standards of the same language unit in the name of promoting linguistic rights is not appropriate for Cameroon because it has serious negative consequences on the long-term survival of these languages especially in this era of globalisation dominated by languages of prestige. We submit that multiple dialects standardisation fragments languages and divides their speakers, thereby, weakening rather than strengthening their linguistic rights. Coupled with arbitrary administrative boundaries and the politics of 'divide and rule', this artificial

multiplication of languages only encourages strong feelings of dialectal loyalty and separateness.

Key words: standardisation, harmonisation, linguistic rights, language fragmentation.

1. Introduction

Successful language standardisation depends largely on how well the concepts of language and dialect are interpreted. According to sociolinguistic theory (Wardhaugh 2002, p. 27-49; Hudson 2001, p. 30-48 & Wills 1997, p. 107-126), there is no clear-cut distinction between these concepts. Despite the centrality of dialectal variation as a natural phenomenon in human speech, there is hardly any consensus on the most acceptable approach of language standardisation and promotion. While some favour the respect and preservation of individual dialects as the ideal means of upholding the linguistic rights of their speakers (Wills 1997, p. 126 & Ugorji 2005, p. 33-43), others think that this has no real scientific and ideological significance (Wiesemann, Sadembouo & Tadadjeu 1988, p. 133-142). The opinion we hold in this paper is in line with the latter position. Our view is that unlike in majority language settings where standardising isolated dialects may contribute to the mainstreaming of the linguistic rights of its speakers without threatening the integrity and survival of all the dialect speakers, in minority contexts, where languages are already seriously endangered, a dialect-approach to the standardisation of languages that already suffer exclusion based on their minority situations only helps to further their endangerment. Such standardisation represents increased socio-economic and political marginalisation, indeed, disempowerment of individual dialect speakers in particular and those of the entire language community in general.

Recognising language development as minority community empowerment means admitting that standardisation in such contexts requires special consideration. It means first and foremost that the linguistic identity of a speaker constructs that

individual's membership in a society through a particular idiom in the everyday (Hornsby & Agarin 2012, p. 91). Also, it implies recognising socio-cultural and linguistic empowerment not only as the preservation and promotion of languages as an abstract concept but also as enabling speakers to safeguard their identities, thereby, asserting their status vis-à-vis dominant languages. It is essentially on this basis, therefore, that we can determine whether or not standardisation actually strengthens minority access to opportunity within a wider national context. With globalisation and expansion of foreign official languages in New Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), addressing this problem appears a major imperative. Local languages deserve a place in education and in ICT. But their minority status does not permit any such eventuality. Will the promotion of individual dialects favour or disfavour such a process? Can we truly promote linguistic rights through fragmented dialect standardisation? Which is more easily realisable, whole-language standardisation or multiple dialects standardisation? These are questions we must endeavour to answer in our attempt to promote written development of Cameroonian languages.

2. Statement of the problem

Language promotion is one of the most fundamental requirements for protecting and uplifting self-image. As such, it is also an essential variable in the assurance of national development. Contrary to earlier thinking that some languages are more important than others, it is now generally accepted that all languages, their numerical strength and scope of territorial spread notwithstanding, play basically the same functions of mediating communication among their speakers (native and non-native alike). However, quite often, these basic facts are not fully understood in a majority of contexts. In minority settings, where colonial languages still dominate, there seems to be a deliberate attempt to downgrade the status of local languages at all levels, thereby, flouting the linguistic rights of their speakers. Due to centuries of total reliance on

foreign languages, communities especially the educated elite have come to regard all forms of modern thought as completely impossible in indigenous languages. Colonial and post-colonial education has continued to denigrate local languages by projecting them derogatorily as patois, vernaculars and dialects. Accompanying this systematic linguistic devaluation has been political dissection of whole-language communities into dialect communities through the policies of divide and rule.

With this prevailing colonial mind-set, Africans have tended to misconstrue the concept of linguistic rights. To many, linguistic rights imply that every single dialect of any given language should be allowed the possibility to acquire a written form. Such a view is held by Ugorji (2005). In his defence of the 'dialect vitality option', he advocates for the promotion of multiple standards of the same language. Underscoring the motivation for such an option, he argues:

The main concern of the 'Dialect Vitality Option' is for dialects and the people who speak them as well as the (sub) cultures they express. The purpose is to express the linguistic rights of people, stem conflicts, loss of language or dialect and cultures, by suggesting sociolinguistic justice which encapsulates balanced language planning and radical socio-political actions. (Ugorji 2005, p. 33-34).

Although his appeal centres primarily on the Igbo situation, it helps explain what obtains in other African settings especially Cameroon. His argument suggests non-recognition of other varieties in the adoption of the standard. This explains his call for sensitiveness towards any negative feelings and frustration by speakers of dialects oppressed by the standard and then, to a democratic solution to language standardisation as follows:

We should therefore recognise the negative feelings against Central Igbo or its successor(s), the feelings of oppression or complaints of imposition, among others, and try to address them with democratic solutions. Moreover, since some dialect communities feel oppressed by those who seem to have some advantage via the development of Standard Igbo, it implies that such are left with no choice but to lose pride and shift from their ancestral dialects.

Ugorji's (2005) appeal reveals that it is not standardisation as such that is a problem but rather the manner in which it is conducted. One is thus tempted to question how maximally productive the 'dialect vitality option' is. Of course, what we observe is that a multiple dialects approach to standardisation is not as problem-free as it may appear.

But what exactly are the reasons underlying the multiple dialects approach to standardisation? Our experience in Cameroon reveals that the choice of this approach stems from some interconnected factors such as:

1. Misconception and misinterpretation of dialectal differences: Lack of understanding of the concepts of language and dialect leads different dialect speakers to consider speech differences as indicators that they speak separate and autonomous languages.

2. Sentimental judgement: The selection of a standard based on sentimental rather than informed decisions gives room for the emergence of more than one standard.

3. Political influence: Unequal treatment of communities based on ethnic and linguistic considerations tends to force different dialect speakers to seek autonomy as a means of achieving self-assertion.

4. Religious influence: Different religious denominations have adopted different standards particularly during the colonial era. With time, coupled with politico-religious interests and differences, sentiments of separateness have deepened until different dialect speakers no longer see themselves as one and the same people.

5. Influence of traditional leadership: Dialect speakers are under different traditional leaderships and accepting one standard for all the dialects implies choosing between allegiances to these leaderships and then admitting the superiority of one leadership over the other(s).

Observably, these causes are for the most part non-linguistic in nature. In these circumstances, the task of the linguist is certainly primordial. Their responsibility is to

provide the simplest yet most effective approach to the standardisation problem.

In Cameroon, where a majority of languages have minority status, standardisation does not always seem to address these crucial non-linguistic concerns. Whether consciously or unconsciously, linguists have encouraged the adoption of several standards, thereby putting to question the very basis of variation as a natural phenomenon in human speech.

3. On the relationship between language and dialect

Demarcating clear boundaries between the concepts of 'language' and 'dialect' has and remains a major sociolinguistic challenge. In fact, it is extremely difficult to state with exactitude where a dialect ends and where a language begins or vice-versa. Wardhaugh (2002, p. 27) summarises the ambiguous relationship in the following terms:

While people do usually know what language they speak, they may not always lay claim to be fully qualified speakers of that language. They may experience difficulties in deciding whether what they speak should be called a language proper or merely a dialect of some language. Such indecision is not surprising: exactly how do you decide what is a language and what is a dialect of a language? What criteria can you possibly use to determine that, whereas X is a language, variety Y is only a dialect of a language? What are the differences between a language and a dialect?

On a similar note, Hudson (2001, p. 32-33) thinks that there is nothing absolute about the distinction that English makes between language and dialect. He, however, recognises that what distinguishes language and dialect are the size and prestige of the different forms used. With respect to size, he sees a language as larger than a dialect in the sense that it has many more items. Concerning prestige, he thinks that whether a variety is called a language or dialect depends on how much prestige it enjoys in terms of its formal written uses. Given these difficulties, we may consider a language simply as a variety that has been selected from among other varieties and

then standardised, and which by such a process, has acquired prestige. This leads to the need to define standardisation. And here, it is important to emphasise that standardisation involves a wide range of activities depending on the state and orientation of written development of a language. In this regard, Hudson (ibid, p. 33) opines:

Whereas one thinks of normal language as taking place in a rather haphazard way, largely below the threshold of consciousness of the speakers, standard languages are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society. This intervention called 'standardisation', produces a standard language where before there were just 'dialects' (in the second sense, i.e. non-standard varieties).

Accordingly, therefore, language is a set of standard and non-standard varieties. It is the variety that has been developed into a standard form through the processes of selection, codification, elaboration and acceptance in that order. While the processes of codification and elaboration have to do with concrete steps towards written promotion of the variety in question, those of selection and acceptance suggest a conscious choice among two or more varieties and the need for the other variety speakers to accept the selected form as the norm. These two processes are foundational in our discussions in this paper. With respect to the more specific activities of standardisation, Wardhaugh (2002, p. 33) notes:

Standardisation refers to the process by which a language has been codified in some way. That process usually involves the development of such things as grammars, spelling books, and dictionaries, and possibly a literature. ... Standardization also requires that a measure of agreement be achieved about what is in the language and what is not. There must be clear boundaries between it and all other languages. Once a language is standardized it becomes possible to teach it in a deliberate manner. It also takes on ideological dimensions – social, cultural, and sometimes political – beyond the purely linguistic ones.

Wardhaugh (2002) specifies a number of crucial issues here. Firstly, agreement on standardisation content is vital

since this determines the degree to which members of the community claim ownership of the standardised language. Secondly, standardisation should establish precise boundaries between the language and all other languages. This helps create a kind of autonomy for the language with respect to other languages. Thirdly, the process recognises the ideological dimension of language development. What this implies is that besides purely linguistic motivations, language development seeks to achieve other fundamental goals such as the preservation and protection of cultural identity, linguistic rights and the demolition of barriers to socio-economic and political opportunity.

4. Language standardisation in the Cameroonian context

Cameroon is recognised as one of the most linguistically complex countries on the continent. This judgement does not insinuate the numerical superiority of Cameroon's linguistic situation over all other countries (since Nigeria counts about 700 languages) but rather that the country's linguistic landscape owes much to the minority status of its languages on the one hand and that these languages are spoken by a relatively small population of just about 20 million on the other (Chiatoh 2014, p. 378). But even more interesting is the fact that we cannot state with exactitude the number of languages in this country. Dieu & Renaud (1983) recognise 234 while Lewis (2009) identifies 286 of which only 279 are living languages. To the latter, 3 of the 286 are second languages without mother tongue speakers while 4 are extinct. Such uncertainty is not specific to Cameroon. In fact, for a great majority of countries in the world, it is difficult to have an exact picture of the language situation because no language censuses exist and where they exist, they are not reliable due to the absence of good numeration techniques (Verdooft 1997, p. 33). In Cameroon, the absence of consensus on the exact numerical status of languages can be explained by the fact that some of the entities we refer to as languages are, indeed, just dialects of some whole-language units. Perhaps, it is also the case that

some of the entities that have hitherto been referred to as dialects may actually be languages. However, the latter option is most unlikely. We observe, for instance, that Ewondo & Bulu (Beti-fang dialects), standardised since the colonial period are used separately today. Yet Beti-fang, given a single harmonised standard, would be among the few most widely spoken languages in Cameroon, second perhaps, only to Cameroon Pidgin. The Beti-fang case reflects a common reality across the country. There is very little effort at harmonised or integrated standardisation of languages. Even when such efforts have been made, as in the case of Ewondo and Bulu, they have met with very stiff resistance mainly for non-linguistic reasons. The table below presents some languages whose dialects have been standardised or are currently undergoing standardisation and which are fully recognised as autonomous languages by linguists.

Language	Standardised varieties	Region
Duala	Duala, Yabassi	Littoral
Mofu	Mofu-Duvangar, Mofu-Gudur	Far North
Koozime	Koozime West, Koozime East	East
Ngemba	Bafut, Nkwen, Mankon	North West
Menemo	Meta, Ghamambo, Moghamo	=/=
Beti-fang	Ewondo, Bulu	Centre and South
No common name	Yemba, Ngiemboon	West

Table 14.1: Some individually standardised varieties

Perhaps, we should note that today, due to overwhelming influence of politics and the absence of expressed intentions to arrest the situation, speakers of these dialects are increasingly regarding themselves as totally autonomous people. The consequence is that as time passes and as dialectal loyalty among different dialect speakers grows, it becomes more difficult to reverse the trend.

What we notice here is that linguistic fragmentation may be deliberate or inadvertent depending on the language policy adopted for a nation and the type of data existing on the linguistic situation. Politically motivated fragmentation takes the form of implicit definition of language policy goals whereby some sections of the polity are given higher priority than others. An extreme dimension of this situation is when these sections are completely excluded from decision-making processes. In fact, the absence of a policy that guarantees respect for and promotion of local languages in education leads local populations to resort to forming pressure groups within language communities to demand for linguistic and political recognition. This is particularly so given that most of the languages in the country are highly mutually intelligible, that is, they actually constitute dialect clusters (Rosendal 2008, p. 14-15). Inadvertent fragmentation on its part is when in developing minority groups, we further weaken them through the recognition of several dialects thus widening the separation gap between them. While the former is a purely political matter, the latter is scientific. It has to do with inappropriate definition and choices of what is language and dialect. However, whether fragmentation is deliberate or inadvertent is practically of little import because the negative consequences on the community remain practically the same.

What is obvious in Cameroon is that the standardisation process is doubly flawed. First, highly mutually intelligible dialects are developed as totally separate languages. A good number of languages already standardised (see table above) fall into this group. Second, standard reference dialects are developed exclusively of the rest of their dialects thus giving the impression that only the standardised variety is good enough for written use. Again, most, if not all, of the languages already developed in the country fall into this category. For instance, in standardising Kom, no attention has been paid to the existence of other dialects like Mbesinaku, Mbenkas, Ake, Mujang and Baicham. This fragmentation is reflected in the assignment of slots for national language broadcasting in official media services as indicated on the table below:

Radio station	Language used	Varieties used	N° of dialects used
NW Regional Station (CRTV)	Ngemba	Nkwen, Bafut, Mendakwe, Mbili	4
=/=	Menemo	Ngie, Menka, Meta, Oshie	4
West Regional Station (CRTV)	Ghomala	Ghomala, Ngemba	2
South Regional Station (CRTV)	Beti-fang	Ewondo, Bulu	2
Littoral Regional Station (CRTV)	Duala	Duala, Yabassi	2

Table 14.2: Some dialects used as whole languages in regional radio stations.

Source: Rosendal (2008)

As the table indicates, mutually intelligible dialects are considered as separate language units and so allocated separate time slots in regional radio stations. Certainly, when individual dialects are treated this way, their speakers get to recognise them as separate and autonomous entities so that over time, integration becomes almost unlikely.

5. Multiple dialects standardisation as linguistic rights endangerment

In linguistically diverse settings, problems of linguistic rights are bound to exist. In these settings, minority languages are doubly disadvantaged. First, in terms of numerical strength, they are weaker than majority languages and so tend to be too easily neglected. Second, they generally lack written development and even when developed, they do not enjoy

promotion within public and private circles because of their low status. With this double disadvantage, standardising dialects as independent languages can very quickly be viewed as programmed linguistic rights endangerment since such development only helps to further their isolation and vulnerability. For standardisation to become empowerment, it must strengthen and not weaken the status of languages in the long-term. The promotion of several standards for minority languages does not facilitate this. Rather, it dissects them into smaller units. In purely linguistic terms, the boundaries created by such a process are artificial since there is generally high inter-comprehension between the different dialects. Our experience shows that even when dialects are not yet written, their speakers tend to develop loyalty towards them either for religious or political reasons. The situation becomes even more complicated with the creation of administrative units like divisions and regions that pay no attention to linguistic realities. For example, Basaa is spoken in the South and Littoral regions as a result of administrative boundaries. Similarly, Bulu is today identified as a language of the South Region while Ewondo is regarded as a language of the Centre Region even if both are mutually intelligible dialects of Beti-fang.

When dialects are developed separately, people who share common origins, languages, values and practices, in short, destinies, are set adrift so that they come to consider themselves as separate entities. Here it would be more realistic to talk of linguistic fragmentation rather than language development or linguistic rights. In contexts where democratisation is yet to become a reality, such fragmentation has both linguistic and socio-economic and political repercussions. The practice of divide and rule facilitates marginalisation and exclusion based on language, geographical and ethnic origins thus considerably weakening their potential for national-level participation. Communities thus become fragile and vulnerable to political machinations and their ability to rally resources for harmonious development is significantly enfeebled. But above all, languages that are already endangered by virtue of their low status are further endangered because

most of them are not written and even those that are written have very limited domains of use. The problem of minority language endangerment becomes particularly preoccupying in this era of globalisation with the spread of the killer languages such as English and French.

Linguistic rights endangerment is thus to be most felt in extreme minority groups. Here, the relationship between high and low status languages greatly determines the degree of endangerment of each language. And talking about endangerment, Lewis (2009, p. 8) holds that this has to do with the number of speakers of each language and the number and nature of the domains in which the language is used. He further argues that it is a matter of degree because while at one end we have vigorous language speakers or functional areas of use, on the other end, there are languages on the verge of extinction. Evidently, the second factor depends on the first. Both ways, it must be underscored; a vast majority of Cameroonian languages have a low status and consequently have very limited domains of use. Given this reality, standardising individual dialects of already extremely minority languages only helps to enhance their marginalisation. In a context such as ours, therefore, it is vital to consider not only the necessity for standardising languages but also whether or not such standardisation actually contributes to preserving and protecting the linguistic rights of their speakers by understanding language endangerment both in terms of the lack of written development and with regard to the absence of domains of written promotion.

If standardisation inherently implies the recognition of written communication as an expression of fundamental human rights, then it means that every individual has the inalienable right to written expression in the language of their choice and for a majority of the people in minority settings; this language is an indigenous mother tongue. This specification is crucial because in a growing number of urban situations, children have only a foreign colonial language as their mother tongue. A look at the UNESCO's (1992) Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic

Minorities may clarify the issues at stake here. Article 2 sub 1 states that “People belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely without interference or any form of discrimination”. From a very literary perspective, one can argue that this article provides for the use of language and not dialects. Viewed from another angle, this means that the promotion of these rights can only be effective when languages are mainstreamed as whole units rather than on individual dialect basis.

Considering the old adage which says that “United we stand and divided we fall”, we see that multiple dialect standardisation only contributes to fragmenting and rendering languages and their speakers more vulnerable. For language standardisation to fully strengthen survival potential of its users, therefore, guarantees must be made for optimal written language use of the language in social interaction and controlling domains. Prioritising written communication in hitherto undervalued languages implies widening access to new opportunities in and for them and ensuring their survivability as well. It involves pooling together people to share common and desired ideas, values, experiences and expectations thus transforming the society by rendering it more accessible and adaptable to changing conditions. In this regard, respect for linguistic diversity is not only viewed from the limited perspective of individual dialect promotion but rather from one which favours respect for all dialects in a holistic manner. Against this understanding, community linguistic empowerment goes beyond language standardisation to include careful consideration of the dangers of fragmentation and endangerment that standardisation may actually trigger.

As language specialists, we certainly agree that language variation is a natural phenomenon. By this acknowledgement, we mean that any language that enjoys vitality and viability may have more than one variety. Another important issue we surely do not disagree with is that variation is the result of

social and regional or geographical factors (Hudson, *ibid*, p. 38-42 & Wardhaugh 2002, p. 43-51). Yet, in practice, our activities suggest that either we are ignorant of these long standing scientific facts or that we simply neglect them or better still that minority languages do not deserve to enjoy variation. This is simply unacceptable. It gives the impression that 'what is good for the goose is not good for the gander'. Acknowledging these basic sociolinguistic facts suggests that cultural diversity inherently implies intra-linguistic (dialectal) variation. This compels us to admit that a standard cannot exist in the absence of a non-standard variety and that a multiple dialect standardisation approach is by nature reductionist in the sense that it leaves us with no dialect or variety option. In a globalising world, where 'unity in diversity' appears a more desirable option than 'disunity in diversity' it becomes clear that the concept of linguistic rights only has meaning in the existence of a language.

In our work at the NACALCO Centre for Applied Linguistics, we were confronted daily with this problem of dialect standardisation. We received applications from speakers of many recognised dialects requesting the written promotion of their varieties. To these requests, our response was simple and clear all the while. They were advised to integrate themselves into the existing language committee if there was one and where none existed to work as a whole-language community for the creation of a fairly representative committee. Quite often, this response was not palatable to many. As expected, many of them felt they wanted their separate committees. Regrettably, even as we advised against multiple dialect standardisations, we still recognised membership into our institution of committees created purely on individual dialectal basis.

For instance, the Mofu-Gudur and Mofu-Duvangar in the Far North, Koozime-West and Koozime-East in the East, the Ewondo and Bulu in the Centre regions were separately registered as members of NACALCO. Of course, NACALCO's recognition of and support to these committees only contributed to deepening the confusion. However, the roots of

this confusion were to be traced from elsewhere. The fact here was that NACALCO only inherited many of these committees from earlier institutions on the field such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL-Cameroon), the Cameroon Association of Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) and churches. And so, given the challenges involved in dissolving these committees and setting up new and more inclusive ones, NACALCO was compelled, much against its ideology, to continue its support to them. While admitting that support to these dialect-based committees contributed to empowering sections of the community, it is also undeniable that a great disservice was done to entire communities comprising more than one dialect by inadvertently encouraging artificial linguistic division based on dialectal loyalty.

In sum, much of the standardisation work in this country has not always resulted in linguistic rights promotion but rather in planned language fragmentation with the danger being that before long, various varieties already enjoying written development become hostile towards a common harmonised form. With this reality, it is obvious that linguistic work in this country has contributed to the complication of an already complex situation.

6. An additive harmonisation alternative

Minority community empowerment involves improving on the daily conditions of members through facilitating written communication in even the smallest languages. In this case, advocating for minority linguistic rights means maximising opportunities for each language to affirm its specific identity. It entails averting linguistic genocide by respecting linguistic human rights particularly in education through mother tongue medium learning (Skutnabb-Kangas 2001, p. 47). In Africa, where the linguistic environment remains dominated by colonial languages and where fragmentation in all its forms is commonplace, there is need for an alternative approach to language development. Such an alternative gives priority to the overall wellbeing of whole language communities rather than

separate autonomous dialectal communities. This alternative approach, which we refer to as the whole-language harmonisation approach prioritises the construction of unity in diversity. It requires researchers as well as governments to recognise representative empowerment of communities as the ideal means for guaranteeing minority linguistic rights protection and promotion. It means recognising harmonisation and unification, indeed, normalisation from a whole-language rather than a multiple dialect perspective. Msimang (1998, p. 165), quoting from Lestrade (1935, p. 137) sees harmonisation as synonymous to unification when he argues that:

[Unification] seeks to construct a common language for such a dialect group by employing as much as possible, forms which are common to all of the variants, in the group, and, where this is not possible, by the use of forms common to the predominant majority, or in previously-attained literary forms.

We note the need for representation of common forms for all the variants in the group such that we only resort to the predominant majority when arriving at common forms proves practically impossible. Viewed from this angle, harmonization should be seen as consensual unification of reading and writing principles. With respect to Africa, this calls for determining the advantages of harmonization and unification over autonomous dialect-based standardisation. On this issue, Wiesemann, Sadembouo & Tadadjeu (1988, p. 139) provide some salient reasons, which we translate, summarise and comment on below, why unification in Africa is important. According to them:

1. There is practically no language that does not have dialects. A language that enjoys vitality and viability should have dialects.

Comment: Promoting individual varieties implies attempting to eliminate dialectal variation. If all dialects are standardised, which shall be a language and which a variety? The problem of dialect unification is thus inevitable, especially in Africa.

2. We cannot standardise all the dialects of a language. Even in standardising just two dialects of a given language, we face the same problems as if we were standardising just one.

Comment: We go through the same process with practically the same results since the linguistic phenomena in one dialect are essentially the same in the other(s).

3. Each time we have had more than one standard dialect; this has been for non-linguistic reasons – ideological, political or religious reasons.

Comment: In Cameroon, this has been motivated by the combined influence of religion and politics.

4. The load of multilingualism. In highly multilingual countries such as Cameroon, the load of multilingualism is considerable. So, if we want to have several dialects for each language, the workload will increase because of multilingualism.

Comment: Standardising more than one dialect for languages leads to artificial multiplication of languages thus further complicating the task of language development.

5. From an economic point of view, adopting several standards for each language necessitates much more money than if we adopted only one since we have to produce books, literacy manuals, etc. in all the standards.

Perhaps, we should add one other very critical dimension here, which is, the ideological factor, thus.

6. Ideologically, African languages by virtue of their minority status and domination by foreign official languages are already so weak that adopting several standards for the same language will only help to render them more disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Adopting several standards is, therefore, scientifically and ideologically not pertinent for Africa because it means artificial multiplication of languages. But even more crucial is the fact that although in our context, a common indigenous language means common hopes, aspirations, history and a common destiny, our communities remain victims of cosmetic separation resulting from misconstrued interpretation of the

concept of linguistic rights. Quoting from Mandela (1994, p. 96-97), Prah (1998, p. 2) enlightens us on the prime cause of our fragmentation and the scientific basis for not recognizing dialectal differences as separateness. According to him, Mandela, a nationalist freedom fighter, was unconsciously pushed to succumb to ethnic divisions by the South African white government until he was challenged by the Queen Regent of Basutoland (Lesotho) when she quipped. "What kind of lawyer and leader will you be who cannot speak the language of your own people?" This was a challenge Mandela was to live to remember. It was this challenge that changed his whole vision of the freedom struggle as the following excerpt reveals:

The question embarrassed and sobered me, it made me realize my parochialism and just how unprepared I was for the task of serving my people. I had unconsciously succumbed to the ethnic divisions fostered by the white government and I did not know how to speak to my own kith and kin. Without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry or savour their songs. I again realized that we were not different people with separate languages; we were one people, with different tongues. (Mandela 1994, p. 96-97) & (Prah (1998, p. 1-2).

Prah's analysis of Mandela's recollections further points out the vainness of claiming separateness on the basis of dialectal variation. According to him, Mandela's words recognize that language is the door into a people's culture and mind and that Sesotho is the language of the Sotho people as well as of the Swana as he submits:

As designatory semantic conventions, Sesotho and Setswana enjoy distinction as separate categories, but what does this separation, this distinction entail? To reduce the differentiation to the status of autonomous and self-standing languages is obviously wrong. But equally flawed is the argument that in all respects as totalized systems of codification there is no divergence between the two types. What Mandela's point implicitly underscores is the fact that Sesotho and Setswana as systems enjoy an overwhelming

degree of mutual intelligibility which signifies dialectal divergences of relative marginality to substantive linguistic differences.

His analysis appears relevant not only for Cameroon but also for the rest of Africa. It highlights the fact that continuous insistence on the adoption of several standards only reveals our naivety towards our minority predicament. For instance, all the dialects developed as separate languages in Cameroon are highly mutually intelligible and in Prah's words 'can be pooled together into wider clusters enjoying significant degrees of mutual intelligibility.' Since dialectal variation is a natural phenomenon, harmonized standardization surely occasions new perceptions of the linguistic reality of language and dialect so that community members come to understand that although they have specific speech differences, they are members of the same community.

Whole language standardization can, therefore, be viewed as additive harmonization. By additive harmonization here, we understand the process by which standardization integrates rather than neutralizes specific dialect features. It enables different dialects to maintain their specific and distinctive features through the adoption of a consensual writing system and orthography principles, thereby, guaranteeing respect for and promotion of the holistic identities of all community members such that in learning one dialect, they are actually learning all the other dialects. This permits them to affirm their uniqueness while at the same time acknowledging and tolerating one another's differences. By virtue of its representativeness, additive harmonization prioritizes the integration of dialects as the basis for a stronger and consensual system so that there is no longer an inferior or a superior dialect but rather a viable and vital language with mutually respected dialects. Sounds or words referring to the same reality in different dialects are inserted into the lexicon or dictionary and used in all written materials.

Additive harmonization takes into account issues of dialectal loyalty. But, where there is extreme resistance to a harmonized standard, it may be necessary to tolerate more

than one standard but only as an initial step towards eventual harmonization. However, we must pay attention to the fact that this involves both linguistic and non-linguistic strategic input. Each set of dialect speakers must immediately perceive the benefits of cultural unification through additive harmonization of different dialectal forms. Where dialects have been standardized as separate autonomous languages, additive harmonization should be encouraged through the production of harmonized transition manuals and literature. Here care should be taken to ensure that although harmonization dictates a written norm, it does not, in any way, impose any pattern of oral use of individual dialects. That is different dialect speakers continue to speak the way they do normally in their everyday interactions. Additive harmonization should thus be contrasted with subtractive standardization, which is in common practice in Cameroon and elsewhere. Subtractive standardization favors the selection of a single dialect that is adopted and imposed on the rest of the dialects of the language community.

7. A look into the future

Despite all their commendable contributions to language promotion in Cameroon, linguists have also laid the groundwork for unnecessary divisions. Repairing the damage caused can certainly never be the responsibility of the linguist alone. It involves all the stakeholders – specialised institutions, governments, university institutions and individual researchers, etc. to turn things around. Among the measures that can be taken to turn things around are: re-orienting research, harmonisation of already standardised varieties, reconfiguration of administrative boundaries and the adoption of an appropriate language policy for the country.

1. Research re-orientation

In Cameroon, linguistic research is conducted by universities, NGOs and individual researchers. However, sociolinguistic research does not always inform standardisation activities. Even when it does, it is mostly researcher-centred.

For instance, university and individual research is generally individually motivated. Private institutional research on its part is more community-focused but relies largely on existing data particularly the inventory on languages. There is thus need for a re-constitution of the country's linguistic map to help bring out the exact number of languages and their different dialectal varieties. For some years, efforts from scholars and universities, coordinated by the Centre de Recherche en Documentation et Traditions Orales en Langues Africaines (CERDOTOLA) have been made. Hopefully, the project should help re-orient research toward whole-language standardisation.

Non-government institutions should become more conscious of the consequences of fragmentation on community and national well-being by devoting enough time to sociolinguistic studies with the aim of identifying the dialectal varieties of each language before any standardisation project. The findings obtained, thereof, should help in additive harmonised language standardisation. Also, a regulatory body should be established to oversee and regulate research.

2. Harmonisation of already-standardised dialects

Here three harmonisation actions will be useful. First, where dialects have been standardised separately, harmonised writing systems and orthographies should be encouraged. This is extremely challenging since speakers need to understand why they should embrace another system. Second, where some dialects have been standardised at the exclusion of others, inclusive harmonisation will be necessary. Third, where none of the dialects has been developed, inclusive harmonisation should be implemented. In all three cases, education and sensitisation are necessary in convincing speakers that speech differences, geographical and ethnic distance do not make them separate people. Where there is strong resistance, sub-standards may be adopted but only as an initial step towards eventual harmonisation. But care must be taken to ensure that the entire community properly understands the benefits of

harmonised standardisation. This involves not only purely linguistic but also social, cultural and political strategic input.

3. Reconfiguration of internal boundaries

Present administrative boundaries are established based on purely political motivations and as such contribute to separating groups that naturally belong to the same community. It would be desirable for these boundaries to be reviewed with language as the basis. Obviously, this is an extremely challenging undertaking since it puts to question the relevance of government action. However, it is not unattainable. Linguists should, based on scientific evidence, undertake to persuade government to review its present internal boundaries. If such an undertaking succeeds, it will enable dialects with the same origins to be grouped together for better and harmonised promotion.

4. An appropriate language policy

Above all, there is need for the adoption of an inclusive language policy for Cameroon. Such a policy, based on a clearly articulated cultural vision, should be explicit on the way languages have to be treated. For some years now, the Ministry of Basic Education has attempted to come up with such a policy but with no concrete results. The Ministry's inability to adopt an inclusive policy suggests government's inherent lack of political will to promote indigenous languages in the country. As the process continues, due attention should be paid to the necessity for all languages to be wholly given the opportunity for written development and promotion in education. The input of linguists and language experts in this process needs not be overemphasised.

8. Conclusion

We have examined language standardisation in Cameroon within the framework of rights protection. In doing this, we have attempted to demonstrate that although language development is an imperative in this country; it could become counter-productive if not well-oriented and conducted. Also, we

have challenged multiple dialects standardisation on the grounds that it favours artificial multiplication of languages and in its place, we have proposed additive harmonisation or whole-language standardisation as the ideal approach for ensuring smooth promotion of linguistic diversity and respect for linguistic rights. Our arguments have sought to demonstrate that while recognising the right of every flower to blossom, we must equally recognise the need for blossoming to involve the whole flower and not simply parts of it since no flower can truly blossom when some of its component parts are ailing. On the whole, we have sought to demonstrate that our wealth lies in our linguistic diversity and our strength in our unity and that we need both wealth and strength in the sustainable protection of linguistic rights. For this reason, we should be constantly reminded by the age long adage which says that ‘united we stand and divided we fall’.

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Research on sign languages and deaf/sign communities in sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges of diversity, documentation, revitalization, language planning, and capacity building

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1. Introduction

This paper looks into developments of sign language and deaf/sign language community research in sub-Saharan Africa. Linguistic and anthropological studies with deaf/sign language communities have only recently begun and have shed light on different facets of diversity on the continent. These studies have also documented influences of language contact, which has been fostered by globalization and development practices and tied to the import and distribution of Western sign languages. This has led to the endangerment of indigenous sign languages in sub-Saharan Africa.

In recent decades, several countries have benefited from initiatives in sign language research, teaching and interpreting. In the next section of the paper, we argue that further such capacity building, including the involvement of deaf/sign language communities and deaf scholars and professionals, is necessary for sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa also see (Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, 2015a) for an expanded discussion of this paper. A further challenge is sign language planning, including the essential improvement of the status of sign languages in sub-Saharan Africa through legislation and their use in education, media, employment and public life. Linguistic and human rights, which protect the cultural identity of deaf/sign community members and their inclusion in all realms of life, are central to this advancement. The

documentation and revitalization of endangered sign languages, fostering the empowerment of deaf Africans, is a major task to surmount in the next few decades.

As this conference is taking place in Cameroon, we are especially pleased to present studies with the Cameroonian deaf community in order to illustrate the issues discussed above. Sign languages that have been used in Cameroon include Cameroon Sign Language and Extreme North Cameroon Sign Language. The on-going documentation of the latter, an indigenous language in the extreme north of Cameroon, presents a case of sign language endangerment.

2. Sign languages, deaf/sign communities, and scientific research

All over the world, including in sub-Saharan Africa, sign languages and deaf/sign communities have emerged whenever deaf people have come together (Monaghan et al. 2003). Textual evidence of gestural/signed communication in Africa dates back to the sixteenth century (Miles 2004, 2005). Research has described sign languages as bona fide languages, which exploit a visual/gestural modality. The signer employs the hands, face, and upper body to express messages, while the eyes receive the information. As typological studies have shown, precise movements of the hands, head, face and upper body, and fusion of manual and non-manual components comprise complex grammars (Kyle and Woll 1988). Non-manual marking includes the articulation of specific facial expressions; simultaneous use of both hands enables spatial agreement and constitutes hold and move paths (Meier 2002) and (Sandler and Lillo-Martin 2006).

The emergence of urban deaf communities in Africa, as in other parts of the world, has been tied to the establishment of deaf schools. The foundation of deaf schools flourished in the 'development' period after World War II, and the educational philosophy and sign language of the donor country were often adopted (Barcham 1988), which has been a major source of language contact and influence from dominant Western sign

languages such as American Sign Language (ASL), *langue des signes française* (LSF), and British Sign Language (BSL). This process of language contact has often threatened indigenous sign languages on the African continent (see section 5).

Sign language research in the United States and Europe has made strides since the 1960s. Studies of African sign languages began much more recently. NGOs and missionaries started creating glossaries in the 1980s (see Schmalting 2012) for an overview on the making of dictionaries; also see (Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, in press b), and then in the 1990s, universities in Kenya and South Africa undertook lexicographical projects (e.g. Akach 1991, Penn et al. 1993). Research into phonology has been conducted as well, for example on Ugandan Sign Language (Nyst 1999) and Kenyan Sign Language (Morgan and Mayberry 2009). Wallin, Lule, Lutalo-Kiingi and Busingye (2006) developed corpus-based lexicographic research in Uganda. Grammatical studies have also been carried out, for instance on syntactic constructions of Kenyan Sign Language, which are touched upon in the introduction of the Kenyan Sign Language dictionary (Akach 1991), also see (Warnke, Okoth, Okombo, Oguto, & Akaranga 2007) & (Morgan 2012). The morpho-syntactic constructions of Ugandan Sign Language were later described by Lutalo-Kiingi (2014).

In addition to research on ‘national’ sign languages, a number of village or rural sign languages have been documented in the region, including Hausa Sign Language in Nigeria (Schmalting 2001), Adamarobe Sign Language in Ghana (Nyst 2007), Dogon Sign Language in Mali (Nyst 2012) and Extreme North Cameroon Sign Language (see section 7).

Furthermore, anthropological and sociological studies have described the lives of deaf people in sub-Saharan Africa, the development of deaf/sign language communities in rural and urban areas, and diverse linguistic, cultural, social, educational and epistemological practices, e.g. in South Africa (Morgan 2008), Congo-Brazzaville (Dalle-Nazébi 2009), Cameroon (De Clerck 2011a, b; 2012), Ghana (Kusters 2012), and Uganda (Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck 2015a, 2015b). Deaf citizenship in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa has received attention

from various disciplinary perspectives (Cooper and Rashid, in press).

3. Challenge of capacity building through sign language teaching and interpreter training

A number of African universities have put resources toward initiatives in sign language teaching and interpreter training. In South Africa, the University of the Free State started a South African Sign Language (SASL) interpreting course. Uganda's Kyambogo University became the first African institution to offer official Diploma courses in Ugandan Sign Language teaching and interpreting in 2002, while the University of Nairobi in Kenya began offering training in Kenyan Sign Language the following year. In 2008, Ethiopia's Addis Ababa University began providing a BA program in Ethiopian Sign Language and deaf culture, and in 2010, Ghana University started a degree course in Ghanaian Sign Language.

Deaf Studies has also been instituted as an academic subject in the region. In South Africa, the University of Witwatersrand established a Deaf Studies department, which offers courses towards a BA of education program in SASL and a course towards an honors program in deaf education. In Uganda, Kyambogo University has sought to expand its provision by compiling a Deaf Studies diploma course, which is due to commence once the government has completed its review process of all courses provided at public universities.

These courses and departments have marked important milestones for the deaf communities in each country. Through sign language teaching and the training of instructors, awareness of these languages has increased, and the number of qualified sign language interpreters has risen. However, although research is growing, there are still many countries on the continent where there is no sign language teaching at university level. In general, sub-Saharan Africa, African deaf citizens, and deaf/sign language communities on the continent are likely to benefit from increased awareness and proficiency in these areas, which supports equal opportunities and

inclusion in family contexts, education, employment, and the public sphere.

4. Challenge of sign language planning and recognition in sub-Saharan Africa

The research and practice of sign language planning and policy often run parallel to evolutions within the framework of spoken languages, although there are also challenges specific to sign language planning (Reagan 2010). In alignment with studies of spoken language planning, (Reagan 2010) distinguishes four kinds of activities: status planning, corpus planning, acquisition planning, and attitude planning

Status planning includes the advocacy of sign language communities all around the world for a form of official recognition of their languages (e.g. see Wheatley and Pabsch 2012 for an overview of recognition in the EU). Apart from a symbolic legitimization of sign language as the language of the deaf/sign language community, objectives of sign language recognition may also include granting linguistic rights to sign language users (including the provision of sign language interpreters), and setting up a legal basis for the use of sign language in education. The two latter objectives are sometimes also covered in disability legislation. Recognition can also contribute to the visibility of sign languages through their increased presence on television and in the media.

To date, four African governments have recognized their national sign languages (personal communication, Philippa Sandholm, 15 July 2013): Uganda (1995), South Africa (1996), Zimbabwe (2010), and Kenya (2010). Sign languages in other countries such as Tanzania, Zambia and Ghana are mentioned in policy; deaf/sign language communities in other countries continue to lobby for legislation and official recognition.

Corpus planning has become an important aspect of sign language planning. Lexicographical projects were among the first scholarly initiatives involving sub-Saharan sign languages, and have resulted in several dictionaries, for example for South African Sign Language (Penn et al. 1993), Kenyan Sign

Language (Akach 2001), Tanzanian Sign Language (Muzale 2004), Zambian Sign Language (2010), and Ugandan Sign Language (Wallin et al. 2006). (For an overview, also see (Lutalo-Kiingi, 2011a, b) and (Schmaling 2012)). Dictionaries of other sign languages (e.g. Rwandan Sign Language) are currently in the making. Additionally, research based on sign language corpora, which exist for Australian, British and Dutch sign languages, is starting to be conducted for African sign languages such as Ugandan Sign Language (Wallin et al. 2006, Lutalo-Kiingi, 2014, in press), Dogon Sign Language (Nyst 2010, 2012) and Extreme North Cameroon Sign Language (see section 7).

Seeds for acquisition planning and attitude planning have also been planted; examples can be found in South Africa and Uganda. Sign language was mentioned by the Pan-South African Language Board, which was created through the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The Board's aim was to "promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of (i) all official languages; (ii) the Khoi, Nama and San languages; and (iii) sign language" (Reagan, 2010, p. 177). A National Language Board was established for SASL in 2001, working towards projects supporting sensitization, needs identification, and the promotion, and development of SASL. This language was also recognized as an official language for learning in public education through the South African Schools Act and the Language in Education Policy (Reagan 2010). Similarly, the constitutional recognition of Ugandan Sign Language (Art. 35) includes that *'the state shall promote the development of sign language for the deaf'* (principle xxiv). The foundation of deaf schools and provision of teachers aims to ensure that deaf learners access quality education within a signing environment (Policy on Disability for Education, White Paper 2011). A major challenge for the future lies in the development of action to realize these rights in practice (for further discussion of UgSL legislation, see Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, in press c).

In partnership with scholars, including deaf African academics, national associations of the deaf (NADs) have a crucial role to play in ensuring that sign language planning and

sign language legislation is prioritized by governments. The first deaf-led African NAD was established in South Africa in 1929 and the most recent in Burkina Faso in 2007 (Hausaland and Allen 2009). NADs need awareness about the importance of the status of sign languages, so that they are able to advocate for legislation and linguistic rights. The sustainability of sign languages and their communities relies on partnerships with NGOs, NADs and scholars in order to contribute to sign language research, teaching and interpreting (also see Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, in press a). In addition, deaf members of parliament (e.g. those currently in office in Uganda and South Africa) can aid the recognition process by politically representing deaf citizens. It is at the level of parliament that language planners can advocate for and ultimately improve the status of sign languages.

The priorities of such advocacy should be sign language recognition, linguistic human rights, access to quality education, access to employment beyond manual jobs, and poverty reduction, according to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) (Hausaland and Allen 2009). Linguistic human rights and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities require governments to recognize and support the specific cultural and linguistic identity of deaf people, including sign languages and deaf culture; facilitate the learning of sign language and the promotion of its users' linguistic identity; take measures to employ teachers who are qualified in sign language; and provide access to sign language interpreters. While Eastern and Southern African NADs have enjoyed transnational exchange and benefited from WFD Congresses in the 1990s and 2000s, the first initiative to support NADs in Western and Central Africa is the WFD's Human Rights and Capacity Building Training Project (for an overview also see Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck 2015a, in press a, b).

5. Challenge of documentation of African sign language diversity and sustainable community development

Since there research on African sign languages has only recently begun, they have only just started to be included in discussions on language diversity and documentation. While spoken African languages have been subject to endangerment studies e.g. under UNESCO (Brenzinger 2007), research regarding the vitality of African sign languages is also still in a beginning stage. As described by (Sands 2009:564), the documentation and preservation/revitalization of African sign languages are imperative: ‘The linguistic diversity represented by Africa’s sign languages alone is greater than that which is widely assumed for the continent’s languages as a whole. Documentation of these languages appears to be urgently needed’.

In light of our discussion on contact with foreign sign languages in section 2, and on-going transnational exchange, a pressing concern is how deaf/sign language communities can benefit from these practices while also preserving and revitalizing their indigenous linguistic and cultural heritage (also see Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck 2015a, in press a).

An overview of the causes of sign language endangerment in both Western and non-Western countries is provided by (Lutalo-Kiingi, Palfreyman and Sagara 2012), and shown in Figure 15.1.

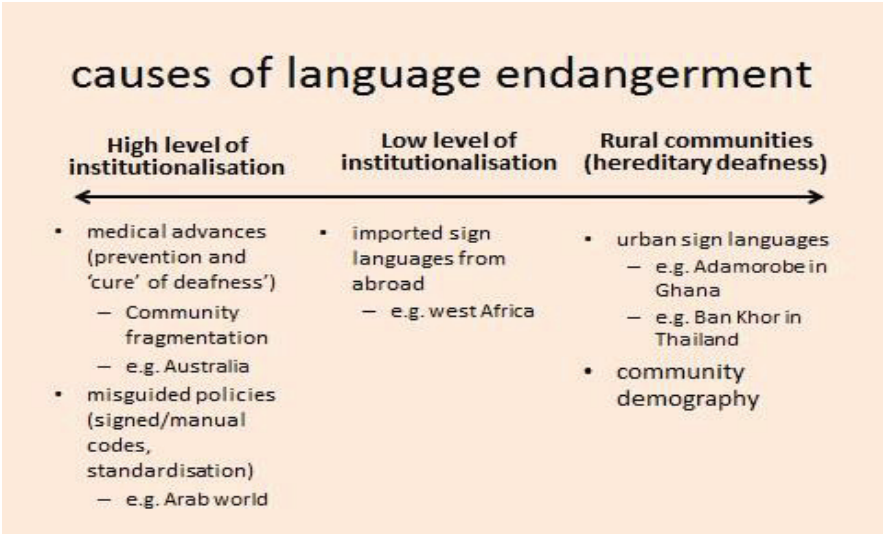


Figure 15.1: Causes of language endangerment.

While sign languages have increasingly received recognition, visibility, and broader use by non-deaf people, recent developments also pose questions about the sustainability of sign language communities. Their future can be seen as uncertain due to the spread of the bionic ear; the decline of deaf schools and deaf clubs where cultural heritage used to be transmitted; the preference of most parents and policy makers for mainstream education; and the growing social mobility, individualism, and virtual and transnational interaction which have changed the dynamics of local deaf community life (De Clerck 2015, De Clerck and Paul 2015). Across the African continent, access to technological and biotechnological assistance is still limited, while basic rights including access to sign language in education deserve further attention (Kiyaga and Moores 2009; Haualand and Allen 2009).

Western sign languages have often had an impact on indigenous national and rural sign languages, through their use in the educational material of missionaries (e.g. Schmalting 2001 on Hausa Sign Language, Nyst 2007, 2010, 2012 on sign languages in Mali, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast; De Clerck, 2012b on Cameroon Sign Language). Indigenous national sign languages may also threaten small-scale rural sign languages, for example the use of Ghana Sign Language in a deaf school near the village of Adamorobe is threatening the trans-generational diffusion of Adamorobe Sign Language. Ghanaian Sign Language itself has been heavily influenced by American Sign Language since the establishment of a deaf school in Accra by Andrew Foster in 1957 (also see Nyst 2010, 2012).

Linguistic diversity may also be threatened by problematic forms of sign language planning, for example through the development of dictionaries which aim to unify sign languages and promote the use of only one variety, such that there is a standard variant for educational contexts. For example, the WFD has expressed concerns about a prescriptive dictionary of Arabic Sign Language that ignores the multiple indigenous sign

languages being used in that region (Reagan 2010). Several African governments have also attempted to try and 'standardize' sign languages by creating dictionaries of artificial languages. The suggested rationale for this is described by Miti (2011, p. v) from Zimbabwe:

The existence of several varieties can impede effective communication between deaf persons who use different varieties. It also poses a pedagogical challenge in that any education system may not know which of the dialects to teach and to use as a medium of instruction at school. This calls for the production of a unified standard variety which can be used in the whole country for both formal and informal purposes.

It is also sometimes assumed that sign languages should contain one sign equivalent per word of the surrounding spoken language. There are convincing arguments against such a policy, including that it exacerbates the endangerment of sign languages, that there is no evidence of the existence of several varieties causing untoward difficulties for deaf people, and that the occurrence of synonyms in natural languages does not impede communication (not to mention, moves to eliminate "superfluous" synonyms in English would not be treated favorably by most English users). Awareness of the value of linguistic diversity in interaction with cultural environments is necessary for the empowerment of deaf/sign communities, and for good practice in educational, interpreting, academic, and policy-making contexts.

Moreover, partnerships among deaf communities, researchers, and NGOs, employing a community-based ethical and human rights practice, are essential to chart the cultural diversity of the African continent and contribute to the flourishing of deaf people (Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, in press a). The preservation and vitality of indigenous sign languages and deaf communities can be fostered by documentation. Through research and the dissemination of findings, larger numbers of both deaf and hearing people may come to realize

that sign languages are fully-fledged languages with intricate phonological, morphological and syntactic structures, and that deaf people have the right to develop their linguistic identities and be included in society as equal citizens.

The next two sections discuss projects on the development of the Cameroon deaf community and the documentation and revitalization of an endangered sign language used in the extreme north of the country.

6. Documentation of sign language and deaf community development in Cameroon

The objectives of the project *Emancipation Processes in the Cameroonian Deaf Community* (De Clerck, Research Foundation Flanders, 2009-2012) were to gain insight into the emerging empowerment of this group. Since it was the first time an ethnographic study was conducted on this topic in Cameroon, the case study was exploratory; the research process was community-based and participatory in alignment with the collective identification of this community. For the present purposes, the discussion here focuses on aspects of the project relevant to sign language development (for a broader discussion, see De Clerck 2011a, b, 2012b, in press). The study illuminates the development of a young urban deaf community and a complex linguistic situation, which is intimately tied to the foundation of deaf schools and contact with Western sign languages (De Clerck 2011a, b, 2012b); in addition, the project found evidence for an undocumented rural sign language in the extreme north. Interdisciplinary anthropological-linguistic cooperation between the authors took place due to Dr. Sam Lutalo-Kiingi's project *Documentation of Extreme North Cameroon Sign Language* under the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (see section 7, also see Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, 2013).

The project drew on multiple sources of data: participant observation during community gatherings and the WFD's Human Rights and Capacity Building Training for the Cameroon NAD; the participation of about 150 deaf Cameroonians in five

local meetings in the Central, North-West, South-West, and Littoral regions; ethnographic interviews conducted in Cameroon Sign Language with 59 deaf men and women diverse in age, region, ethnicity, religion and educational background; and discussion of preliminary findings with deaf leaders and the broader community in local meetings. Cooperation with Cameroonian deaf artist Eyonga Beltus, who made drawings of key moments and experiences in deaf people's lives (see Figure 15.2), led to a helpful discussion of the process with community members who were not familiar with the concept of research. A methodological stance of inter-sectionality was employed to analyze different axes of oppression.

The first deaf school in Cameroon, founded by French missionaries in Yaoundé in 1972, had an oral educational philosophy. Children apparently developed their own signed communication in the playground, and participants recalled that this emerging language differed from the gestures used in their home environment and villages. However, this emergent sign language found little room to grow, and in 1979, the deaf African-American missionary Andrew Foster (also mentioned in section 5 above in relation to Ghana) founded a deaf school in Kumba in the South-West region, which is Anglophone. There he introduced ASL, although actually a sign system based on English rather than ASL was used at the school, in alignment with prevailing 'Total Communication' philosophies. Deaf students and graduates from Kumba socialized in Yaoundé and other areas, and eventually ASL spread across the country. In the 1990s, LSF was introduced into deaf schools in some Francophone areas, such as Yaounde and Bafoussam.

The use of Cameroon Sign Language symbolically marks the 'border' of the country's deaf community, distinguishing its members from people who use gestures and/or have grown up in rural areas, without attending deaf schools or otherwise being in touch with other deaf people. The transition from gestural communication to formal signing in deaf schools or upon encountering the adult deaf community is experienced as a turning point in the lives of community members. Cameroonian deaf people's description of this transition

illustrates the ideologies of Western education, sign language and religion that were brought into the country along with 'development'. For example, the transition requires common iconic gestures (e.g. referring to a man's beard and a woman's breasts to mean 'father' and 'mother' respectively) are replaced by formal ASL signs (see Figure 2, where the man on the right is articulating the ASL sign for 'father' and the one on the left is using the traditional iconic gesture).

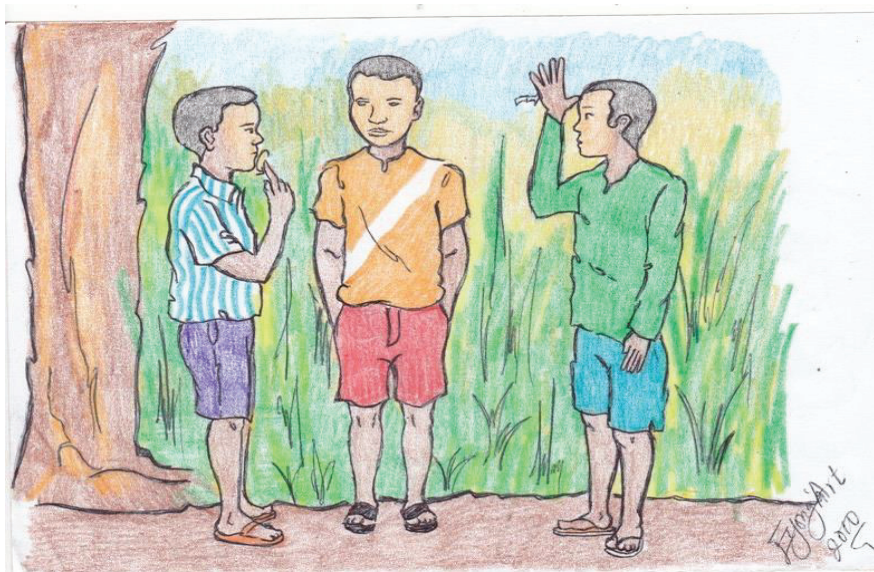


Figure 15.2: Illustration of ASL signs and traditional iconic gesture

Deaf Cameroonians, then, may experience marginalization and linguistic exclusion before coming into contact with other deaf people: those who made the aforementioned transition emphasize that they had felt limited before and that the use of sign language helped them. However, linguistic research in rural contexts needs to provide further insight into these processes, more particularly into the commonly used gestural basis which may be exploited to powerful effect in some contexts and add depth to certain discussions. Such insight may

be possible through comparisons between the views of urban signers and those in the extreme north area (also see the next section).

Linguistic research can also investigate language variation, which is a crucial issue given that educational and ideological pressures have led to Cameroon's sign language varieties being seen as separate languages, to wit, instantiations of ASL and LSF in Anglophone and Francophone regions respectively. Critical sign language awareness has begun to emerge among the community, initiated in part by a sign language workshop at the WFD's Human Rights and Capacity Building Training in Yaounde (Lutalo-Kiingi 2011b; De Clerck 2011b) and continued at the International Sign Language Workshop during WOCAL-7 (Lutalo-Kiingi & De Clerck 2012), (Lutalo-Kiingi 2012a) and (De Clerck 2012a). Hopefully, this awareness raising can be supported further through the documentation of ExNorthCamSL (see section 7). Recognition of Cameroon Sign Language may also be assisted by documentation, but it is still unclear whether this is in fact a group of different sign languages or one language with regional variations (see also Reagan 2010 for a discussion of variation in SASL).

7. Documentation of Extreme North Cameroon Sign Language

The abovementioned project aiming to document the endangered rural sign language in the extreme north (Lutalo-Kiingi, ELDP, 2013-2015) was put on hold in its second year due to on-going violent conflict in the area, and will be continued as soon as security has improved. ExNorthCamSL is named here for research purposes after the region where it is quite openly and even proudly used. In fact, all of the region's signers use it for the majority of their communication. To refer to their language, signers use both the sign for 'chicken', which is used in the wider Cameroon Sign Language community to refer to gestural communication (also see section 6 above) and the sign for 'sign' (index fingers in an up and down movement).

In comparison with the other regions in Cameroon, contact with Western sign languages ASL and LSF in the extreme north has remained rather limited, since it is a relatively isolated region. There has been contact with signers from other nearby countries though, for example travelers from Nigeria and Chad, as well as signers from other regions in Cameroon such as Yaoundé, often tied to trade and/or family visits. However, a recent source of influence can be found in the introduction of Cameroon Sign Language variants that have undergone contact with Western sign languages, through cooperation with institutions in Yaoundé and their teachers who received training from missionaries (also see section 6). These variants are increasingly being used among the younger population in the area, although adults have been reluctant to adopt them outside the school context. A major challenge for the preservation of ExNorthCamSL is these variants' higher status and association with literacy. Due to the low number of users, ExNorthCamSL is in a very vulnerable position, although its users seem to have developed some sense of language awareness and pride.

The objectives of the project have been tailored to the community's needs and to their specific request for documentation of ExNorthCamSL in a printed dictionary, as this is prestigious in the local context. It also encourages language awareness and language planning, and is not dependent on internet connections or other expensive technologies. The development of sign language dictionaries has been a key factor in promoting the status of many sign languages in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Reagan 2010, Schmaling 2012, Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, in press b). The eventual published dictionary of ExNorthCamSL will be organized according to the internal formational structure of signs including hand shapes and places of articulation on the hands/body, and the picture of each sign will be accompanied by both English and French glosses, meanings, and example sentences. Other project outcomes include an annotated and archived data corpus of ExNorthCamSL, featuring 25 signers balanced in terms of gender and age, and an educational DVD about ExNorthCamSL

entitled *Extreme North Cameroon Sign Language and the Deaf Community in the Extreme North of Cameroon*. Additionally, the study shall result in a language awareness play; Cameroonian signers' life stories and folklore; and documentation of the ethics process. Data have been stored in the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

Innovations of this work include combining linguistic and anthropological perspectives and utilizing a community-based research stance that supports local capacity building by training language consultants (also see Lutalo-Kiingi & De Clerck 2013), and which is sensitive to local forms of cultural expression, such as performance, a prominent feature of Cameroonian deaf social and cultural practice (De Clerck 2011a, b; 2012a, b). The project can be seen as an example of South-South partnership, as it nurtures knowledge exchange between Uganda and Cameroon (also see Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck, in press a).

8. Conclusion¹

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Linguistic and anthropological research with African deaf/sign language communities and their sign languages has only just begun. More research is needed in order to document and support the revitalization of indigenous sign languages, which are linguistically and culturally rich but vulnerable due to language contact and transnational exposure. Amelioration can be achieved through further capacity building in sign language research, teaching and interpreting, especially with the involvement of African deaf scholars and their communities, which are essential for robust ethical practice (also see Lutalo-Kiingi 2012 a, b).

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Sam Lutalo-Kiingi and Goedele De Clerck have collaborated as co-researchers in Cameroon and Uganda, encouraging South-South cooperation between the two countries.

Que faire à l'école avec les langues africaines ?

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Résumé

Il est redevenu à la mode de parler de l'introduction à l'école primaire des langues africaines dites « maternelles ». Cependant, une ambiguïté persiste dans les discours sur ces sujets : veut-on promouvoir l'enseignement des langues africaines à l'école, l'enseignement en langues africaines, ou les deux ? Le même flou se retrouve au sujet de ce qu'il serait souhaitable d'enseigner avec ces langues. Faudrait-il prendre les manuels existants en français ou en anglais et les traduire dans les langues maternelles ? Ne vaudrait-il pas mieux utiliser les langues africaines pour enseigner autre chose, mais quoi ?

Les savoirs locaux, qui sont appelés parfois « traditionnels » ou « endogènes », sont relativement peu mis à contribution dans les pratiques éducatives des pays francophones d'Afrique subsaharienne. Nous plaçons pour leur utilisation rationnelle dans les programmes scolaires de l'enseignement de base et même au-delà. Les langues locales en sont le moyen d'expression original. De cette façon, nous espérons œuvrer positivement à la fois pour la promotion des langues africaines et pour celle des savoirs africains. D'autre part, en présentant les leçons aussi bien en langues africaines qu'en français (ou potentiellement en anglais), nous souhaitons aussi pouvoir combler la brèche qui sépare le milieu rural du milieu urbain : les savoirs locaux ne doivent pas être réservés aux élèves des villages qui sont censés mieux maîtriser les langues africaines.

Les savoirs locaux sont relativement peu documentés et surtout peu investis dans les pratiques éducatives des pays francophones d'Afrique subsaharienne. Tout au plus les curricula de certains pays, comme ceux du Cameroun, prévoient-ils une ouverture sur le milieu (étude du milieu, activités pratiques et pédagogiques), qui permet en théorie de déboucher sur les savoirs locaux) ; mais, faute de méthode, de formation et de ressources, cette activité est souvent tombée en désuétude, d'autant que cette matière n'est pas évaluée lors des compositions de fin d'année et des examens de fin de cycle.

Actuellement sont menées de nombreuses études et recherches sur l'amélioration de la qualité de l'éducation, qui est devenue un enjeu principal des programmes sectoriels pour la décennie 2010-2020 (fonctionnement de l'école, formation des enseignants, réformes curriculaires, langues de scolarisation dans l'enseignement primaire). Nous n'avons pas pour ambition de régler une fois pour toute l'épineuse question des langues africaines à l'école. Notre propos est à la fois plus limité et plus concret. Il s'agira de montrer comment, à partir d'exemples pris en *fulfulde*, on peut enrichir les contenus de l'enseignement de base (mais aussi, pourquoi pas, ceux de l'enseignement secondaire, voire supérieur) en allant chercher méthodiquement dans l'inépuisable réservoir des savoirs locaux.

Depuis les années 2000, nous travaillons au nord du Cameroun plus particulièrement sur les questions de langue et de communication dans le domaine du développement. Les principaux thèmes qui nous ont mobilisés et qui nous mobilisent encore sont la santé et l'agriculture. En 2010, nous avons eu l'occasion de revenir sur la question de l'enseignement, que nous avons autrefois abordée dans un ouvrage sur l'école à Maroua (Tourneux & Iyébi-Mandjek 1994).

Nous présenterons ici les grandes lignes d'une proposition relative à l'utilisation de langues africaines à l'école, que nous avons développée à partir du livre pionnier de Donaint (1975) : *Les Cadres géographiques à travers les langues du Niger : Contribution à la pédagogie de l'étude du milieu*. Derrière ce titre

rébarbatif se cache un ouvrage remarquable, qui aborde l'enseignement de la géographie d'après les concepts exprimés dans les principales langues nigériennes. L'auteur ne part donc pas de l'approche européenne telle qu'on la trouve dans les manuels de géographie en langue française pour les adapter en langues locales. Au contraire, il part des connaissances véhiculées par les langues nigériennes pour construire son enseignement à partir de là.

Notre proposition ne prétend pas être valide pour l'ensemble de l'Afrique, mais nous l'avons conçue en pensant plus particulièrement à l'Afrique francophone de l'Ouest et du Centre. Elle est théoriquement applicable à toutes les langues de cette zone. Cependant, elle doit être modulée en fonction des situations sociolinguistiques particulières de chaque région au sein de cette zone.

Depuis plus de cinquante ans déjà, en Afrique, des voix s'élèvent pour demander que l'enseignement de base soit dispensé en langues africaines. De nombreuses expérimentations ont eu lieu et ont encore lieu notamment en Afrique francophone (Mba et Messina 2003 ; Tadadjeu et Sadembouo 2004 ; Nikiéma 2008). Il existe une bibliographie pléthorique sur le sujet, dont la simple énumération dépasserait le cadre du présent article. On en retiendra que, si la plupart de ces expérimentations sont dites positives, elles tardent à se généraliser. D'autre part, le monde n'est plus ce qu'il était au moment des Indépendances. La globalisation est passée par là et il est bien difficile de persuader les parents qu'il est mieux pour leurs jeunes enfants d'être scolarisés dans une langue locale, fût-elle « maternelle ». On peut assez aisément les convaincre que l'apprentissage de la lecture et de l'écriture est plus facile quand il se fait dans une langue que l'on connaît. Mais les parents souhaitent généralement que l'on passe rapidement à un enseignement dans une langue officielle internationale. Peut-on dire qu'ils ont tort ?

Que pourrait-on alors enseigner dans les langues locales ? Faudrait-il traduire les manuels de calcul, de sciences de la vie et de la terre, d'histoire et de géographie qui existent en français et en anglais ? La simple traduction en langue peule du

manuel de CE 2 « Les Nouveaux Champions en mathématiques » exigerait la création de cent quatre-vingts néologismes (Tourneux *et al.* 2011 : 21-25). C'est faisable (Diki-Kidiri 2008), mais est-ce souhaitable ?

On créerait ainsi une langue purement scolaire que l'enfant ne pourrait utiliser nulle part ailleurs qu'à l'école. Il se retrouverait coupé de ses parents par sa propre langue : un comble !

Paradoxalement, en adoptant cette option de la traduction, on fait comme si les connaissances dignes de ce nom n'étaient que celles que l'on trouve dans les manuels conçus selon les normes étrangères. Pourtant, pour peu qu'on les observe de près, les savoirs locaux sont beaucoup plus riches qu'on ne le croit. Ces savoirs sont parfaitement exprimés par les langues locales. D'où l'idée d'enseigner à l'école les savoirs locaux dans des langues locales. Cet enseignement trouverait sa place à côté des autres cours portant sur les matières classiques, qui eux resteraient en langue officielle internationale.

On aura remarqué que nous parlons de l'enseignement *en* langues africaines, et non de l'enseignement *des* langues africaines, que nous verrions plutôt situé à partir du cycle secondaire. Notre option renvoie donc après l'école primaire (ou de base) l'acquisition du métalangage spécifique qu'exige l'enseignement des langues africaines.

1. Les savoirs locaux

Qu'entendons-nous par « savoirs locaux » ? Notre approche souhaite rompre définitivement avec une vision folklorisant, qui ne retiendrait que l'aspect extérieur de cultures dépouillées de toute signification profonde. Nous parlerons aussi résolument « des » cultures et « des » savoirs, au pluriel : cette pluralité saute aux yeux de l'observateur le moins averti.

D'autres auteurs parlent de savoirs traditionnels (UNESCO) ou endogènes (Hountondji 1994). Selon l'UNESCOⁱⁱⁱ, '[L]es savoirs traditionnels sont liés à l'ensemble des connaissances, savoir-faire et représentations des peuples ayant une longue histoire avec leur milieu naturel. Ils sont étroitement liés au

langage, aux relations sociales, [...] et sont généralement détenus de manière collective.’

D’après ce texte, les « savoirs traditionnels » seraient « détenus de manière collective », c’est-à-dire diffus au sein de chaque société. Ils porteraient aussi principalement sur le milieu naturel. Nous ne souhaitons pas, pour notre part, utiliser cette expression de « savoirs traditionnels ». Nous rejoignons en cela Paulin Hountondji (1994 : 13) qui écrit ceci :

[... dans] cette expression couramment utilisée, et sans doute efficace pour les besoins d’une désignation empirique – tant il est vrai que tout le monde sait ou croit savoir de quoi il s’agit quand on parle de « savoirs traditionnels » – l’adjectif traditionnel n’est innocent qu’en apparence. Spontanément utilisé par opposition à « moderne », il véhicule l’idée obscure d’une coupure radicale entre l’ancien et le nouveau. Il fige ainsi l’ancien en un tableau statique, uniforme, sans histoire et sans profondeur, où tous les points paraissent rigoureusement contemporains, en réservant à l’ordre nouveau le prestige – ou le malheur – du mouvement, du changement, bref, de l’historicité.

Le philosophe béninois préfère parler de « savoirs endogènes », et il s’en explique (*ibid*: 14-15):

Le terme [de « savoirs endogènes »] évoque l’origine des savoirs en question en les désignant comme des produits internes tirés du fonds culturel propre, par opposition aux savoirs exogènes, importés d’ailleurs. Sans doute objectera-t-on que cette distinction elle-même est toute relative et ne vaut qu’en première approximation, puisque ce qui paraît aujourd’hui endogène a pu être importé à une époque lointaine, puis assimilé par la société et parfaitement intégré, au point de faire oublier ses origines étrangères. [...]

On appellera donc « savoir endogène », dans une configuration culturelle donnée, une connaissance vécue par la société comme partie intégrante de son héritage, par opposition aux savoirs exogènes qui sont encore perçus, à ce stade au moins, comme des éléments d’un autre système de valeurs.

Nous ne pouvons que souscrire à cette visée démystificatrice : il n'existe pas d'endogène absolu, mais il y a un mouvement permanent par lequel l'exogène d'aujourd'hui peut intégrer l'endogène de demain. Le terme d'« endogène » ne nous satisfait pourtant pas pleinement ; peut-être est-ce dû à l'importance que nous accordons à l'étymologie pour décrypter le sens profond des mots. En effet, le suffixe -gène fait bel et bien référence à une origine, comme Hountondji (1994) le reconnaît lui-même. L'endogène est 'ce qui prend naissance à l'intérieur', et l'exogène, 'ce qui provient de l'extérieur'.

Le philosophe béninois lui-même reconnaît aussi qu'en la matière, ce n'est pas l'origine qui est importante, mais le sentiment d'appropriation complète. Pour cette raison, nous préférons employer d'un adjectif banal, et parler de « savoirs locaux ». Le « local » est ce qui concerne un lieu, une région. En l'occurrence, nous entendrons par « savoirs locaux » les connaissances dont disposent des groupes humains localisés, indépendamment d'apports extérieurs en cours. Lorsque l'on demande à quelqu'un sur le terrain pourquoi il fait ceci ou cela de telle manière plutôt que de telle autre, on obtient souvent la réponse suivante : « Ici, c'est comme ça que nous faisons ou c'est comme ça que nous disons ». Nous avons là la signature du « local », qui s'opposera à ce qui vient d'ailleurs ; pour des techniques agricoles non encore intégrées, on pourra entendre des paysans dire : « C'est tel Projet qui nous a dit de faire comme ça ». Dans ce dernier cas, nous ne pourrions parler de savoirs locaux.

2. Un modèle méthodologique

Des savoirs locaux existent de façon diffuse dans tous les domaines de l'activité humaine. Nous en avons fait un catalogue minimal dans Tourneux, Boubakary et Hadidja (2011 : 53-56). Ils vont bien au-delà des connaissances relatives au milieu naturel, passant des jeux, à l'agriculture, la boucherie, la cuisine, l'élevage jusqu'à l'architecture, la littérature orale, etc.

Dans ce même ouvrage méthodologique, nous montrons, exemples à l'appui, comment l'on peut recueillir les savoirs

locaux, qui, contrairement à une imagerie véhiculée couramment, ne résident pas tout constitués dans l'esprit d'un grand sage qu'il suffirait d'interviewer. Ces savoirs informent l'action, au sens philosophique du terme, et ne sont généralement transmis que dans l'action.

3. À la recherche des savoirs locaux

Voici, en résumé, la procédure que nous proposons pour dégager du vécu les savoirs locaux et en faire la matière de leçons destinées à l'enseignement.

- il faut d'abord choisir les thèmes sur lesquels on voudrait faire porter les leçons.
- ensuite, on procède à une fouille bibliographique sur le sujet (ouvrages scientifiques de toutes disciplines portant sur la région concernée). Dans ces ouvrages, on trouvera déjà quantité d'informations qui ont été recueillies par des chercheurs dans des perspectives autres que pédagogiques.
- puis, à partir de mots-clés dans la langue locale, on bâtit un plan d'interview sur le sujet retenu.

Voici, par exemple, quelques mots clés concernant la culture du sorgho repiqué, qui nous donneront les lignes principales de l'enquête :

<i>saaka</i>	semer à la vole	<i>tuppa</i>	faire la trouaison
<i>saakre</i>	semis à la vole	<i>daaynindira</i>	espacer
<i>karal</i>	sol d'argiles gonflantes	<i>okoloore</i>	mare artificielle
<i>gooforiwal</i>	plantoir à sorgho	<i>hoortoo</i>	sarcler
<i>jabbirgal</i>	plantoir	<i>korooto</i>	sarclage

Tableau 16.1: quelques mots clés concernant la culture du sorgho

Les connaissances personnelles ou l'étude bibliographique permettront de compléter si besoin est. À partir de là, on construit un plan d'interview :

- le semis de sorgho de saison sèche
- la préparation du champ

- (c) le repiquage
- (d) l'arrosage du trou
- (e) les sarclages
- (f) la protection contre les voleurs et les oiseaux
- (g) la récolte

On passe ensuite aux interviews dans la langue, complétées par l'observation directe sur le terrain.

4. Rédaction

Après avoir transcrit toutes les interviews, on rédige un texte de leçon suivant un plan détaillé. Le texte est traduit et les langues sont mises en vis-à-vis. On peut dès lors utiliser la leçon à la fois en langue africaine et en français.

A. Présentation bilingue

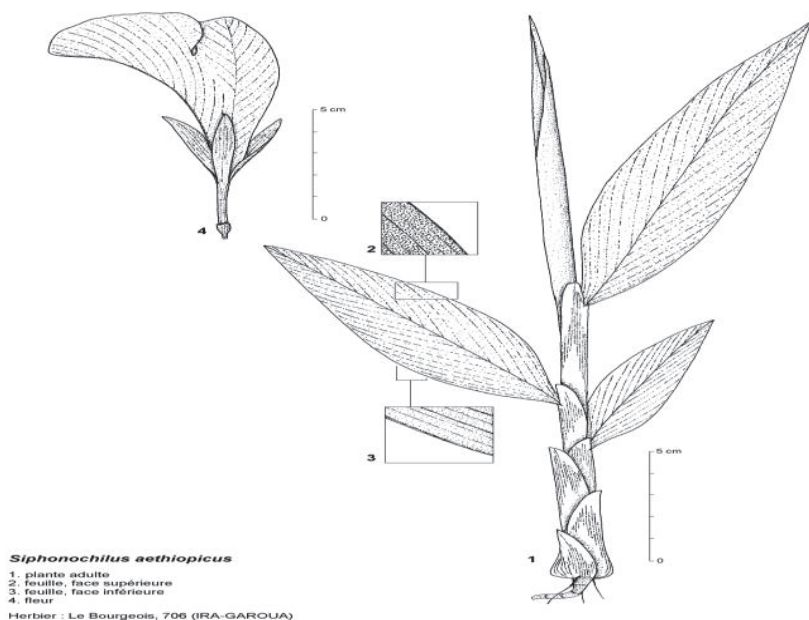
Voici un exemple de ce que l'on obtient, le texte en langue peule apparaissant en page paire et sa contrepartie française en page impaire :

Taaskarakuudekaral • Kuudekaredonpuɗɗadagatod uumolnaasti ni, wakkati to ardiibelesdimaatiniummaatoj ebecurikarenii. - Bedonkadadabbaajinaas-tugokarengamhaahudohebama wnaboodɗum. To hudo man rammijamum, walaa no kowiikiree, - karalboohebataawiikeego no haani.	Les préparatifs de la culture • Les travaux de culture du mouskouari commencent dès la saison des pluies, lorsque les autorités traditionnelles annoncent à la population qu'il est désormais interdit de conduire les animaux dans les champs. Si l'on interdit l'entrée du bétail dans les champs destinés au mouskouari, c'est pour que l'herbe puisse bien pousser. En effet, si l'herbe est trop courte, il sera impossible de la faucher et le terrain ne pourra pas être nettoyé
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Tableau 16. 2: Présentation bilingue

B. Importance de l'illustration

L'illustration graphique a une importance capitale dans ce genre de manuel. Voici l'exemple d'un nom de plante, tout à fait évocateur si l'on se réfère à l'illustration, mais mystérieux en l'absence d'image :



noppi-wamnde

(litt. oreilles d'âne)

Siphonochilusaethiopicus (Le Bourgeois et Merlier 1995)

Nous pensons aussi que l'usage de la vidéo pourrait idéalement compléter les textes. Cette option restera sans doute quelque temps théorique, tant que les écoles ne disposeront pas du matériel requis pour lire ces vidéos et de locaux sécurisés pour l'y entreposer.

5. Avantages de la méthode proposée

Grâce à la méthode que nous mettons en place, l'enfant n'est plus pris pour une *tabula rasa*. Il constate par lui-même qu'il a déjà des connaissances qui jusqu'alors n'ont jamais été prises pour telles. Cette valorisation de sa personne l'encourage à participer activement au cours et illustre par la même occasion l'interaction tant prônée par la pédagogie actuelle.

L'élève parle avec ses parents des sujets abordés à l'école. Les parents peuvent en profiter pour compléter l'enseignement que l'enfant a reçu à l'école. Les parents à leur tour se sentent valorisés en apportant à l'écolier un savoir dont ils sont au moins partiellement détenteurs.

Les jours qui suivent l'exposé de la leçon, l'enfant ramène à l'école le fruit de l'échange qu'il a eu avec ses parents et contribue ainsi à enrichir la thématique proposée.

Le caractère bilingue de la leçon permet qu'elle soit donnée soit en langue locale africaine, soit français si la classe est linguistiquement trop hétérogène, soit à la fois dans les deux langues de façon à enrichir les compétences de l'enfant des deux côtés.

Du point de vue des curricula, ce type de leçons peut être introduit très progressivement dans les emplois du temps. Il n'est pas nécessaire de refondre les programmes officiels existants, qui demeurent valides.

6. Conclusion

On nous aura bien compris. Les langues africaines à l'école ne sauraient être le simple réceptacle de la traduction de programmes scolaires conçus en français ou en anglais. Elles deviennent un enjeu pour le système éducatif si elles servent à valoriser les savoirs locaux (connaissance du milieu naturel et de sa transformation, techniques artisanales, histoire locale et fonctionnement de la société, littérature orale, etc.). Elles sont alors un outil de connaissance et d'interaction avec le milieu et la société. Les savoirs locaux étant relativement peu documentés et surtout peu investis dans les pratiques éducatives des pays francophones d'Afrique subsaharienne, la

tâche qu'il reste à accomplir est vaste mais également passionnante. À nous de nous organiser pour relever le défi.

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ⁱⁱÉtudiante à l'École normale supérieure de Maroua.

ⁱⁱⁱUnesco, « Savoirs traditionnels », Paris, Bureau de l'information du public, MEMOBPI2006.

Silt'e as a medium of instruction

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1. Introduction

Silt'e is an Ethno-Semitic language spoken by an estimated 1,000,000 people in central Ethiopia (Lewis 2009). The Silt'e language is used as medium of instruction in elementary schools (called 'First Cycle') in Silt'e speaking areas; additionally, the language is offered as a subject up to 10th grade. The official writing system of Silt'e is an adaptation of the Ethiopic Fidel script with some changes to account for its unique phonology. The decision to use Silt'e as a medium of instruction was made in 1995.

It is the author's opinion that the decision to develop and distribute Silt'e educational materials was implemented very suddenly, without sufficient preparation. The Regional Education Bureau has delegated the Zonal Education Department, currently called the Education Desk, to carry out the production and distribution of the Silt'e educational materials. However, its staff members are neither proficient nor trained in the Silt'e language.

As a result, the Education Desk selects individuals from different sectors and assigns them to produce these materials. The main purpose of this paper is to evaluate the development of the Silt'e language as a medium of instruction, with special attention to the quality of materials in connection with the Silt'e orthography and its grammatical structure.

The data for this study was collected using a questionnaire (Hussein Mohammed 2010, in short HM in following quotations): in order to substantiate the results from the questionnaires, follow-up interviews were conducted, and various Silt'e language textbooks were examined; my personal

experience and observations as a linguist and a native speaker of Silt'e have also played an important part in this study.

2. The quality of materials: the linguistic aspect

Any educational material should satisfy the following minimal requirements: the spelling should conform to the Silt'e writing system; the materials should be in line with the Silt'e grammatical structure and usage and should focus on culturally relevant aspects. However, most respondents (teachers, parents and school officials, as summarized in Table 17), were concerned about the quality of materials:

Statements regarding the quality of the materials:	Teachers	Parents	Directors or officials	Total	Percent
Quite poor-neither understandable nor clear	17	4	2	23	46
Clear- fairly good	5	2	3	10	20
Indifferent-neither bad nor good	-	-	5	5	10
No answer	4	-	-	4	8
From grade 1-4 good; above grade 4 bad	4	-	-	4	8
With some minor problems	-	4	-	4	8
Total	30	10	10	50	100

Table17.1: Results of Evaluative Questionnaire (Hussein Mohammed, p. 59)

Apart from the respondents listed in the table, many students reported some difficult and unknown words in the

materials; some teachers and parents were not able to explain these difficult words to the students either (HM:54). Among the eight interviewed material producers or editors, six of them do not believe that they are competent enough in Silt'e to even do the task. And most teacher respondents felt the materials to be quite poor. Some specific problems are discussed briefly below.

A. Textbook problems

The teachers specifically stated that the following problems are found in Silt'e textbooks (Hussein Mohammed: 60):

a) Orthographic problems: countless spelling errors, inconsistency in spelling due to either dialect variations or otherwise, and use of Amharic symbols which are not part of the Silt'e writing system

b) Direct grammatical translation based on Amharic, resulting in unnatural constructions or unintended meanings in Silt'e

c) Amharic and Arabic loans are found in the materials, where Silt'e words do exist

d) Non-Technicality: not using consistent terminology for key concepts.

e) Technical terms introduced into the books are not well-defined and are difficult to understand even revising the book does not seem to bring any improvement. According to nineteen teachers, the revised books are as bad as the original ones; some say even worse (HM: 59f). To substantiate the results from the questionnaires, some materials were examined, and the results, as shown below, are found to be in line with the assertions of teachers.

B. Grammatical problemsⁱ

The material producers most often construct Silt'e via direct grammatical translation methodology from Amharic. That is, the materials are direct translations of Amharic original textbooks for the respective grades – resulting in semantically, grammatically, and culturally unnatural constructions in some cases and with unintended meanings in Silt'e in other instances.

First, in Silt'e, there are three prefixes which can be easily confused with the Amharic prefix ከ- /kə-/: በ- /ba-/ "from" (ablative), ለ- /la-/ "from" (origin, point of departure) and, ተ- /ta-/ "together with" (associative). In most cases in the Silt'e educational materials, however, only ተ- /ta-/ is used in the Silt'e translations, even in places where በ- /ba-/ or ለ- /la-/ are more appropriate, resulting in unnatural constructions or unintended meanings (1 and 2, below).

1) Amharic Original: ከ-ሱቅገዛሁ /kə-suk' gazahu/ "I bought (it) from a shop"

Silt'e translation in textbook: ተ-ሱቅወከብኩ /ta-suuk' wakabku/ "I bought with a shop"

Correct Silt'e: በ-ሱቅወከብኩ /ba-suuk' wakabku/ "I bought (it) from a shop"

2) Amharic Original: ከ-መስጊድመጣ /kə-masgidmat't'a/ "he came from mosque"

Silt'e translation in textbook: ተ-መስጊድመጣ /ta-masgiidmat'a/ "he came with a mosque"

Correct Silt'e: ለ-መስጊድመጣ /la-masgiidmat'a/ "he came from mosque"

Second, the suffix -a is an accusative marker in Silt'e; not using it appropriately could result in an intended grammatical object being interpreted as a grammatical subject: ከራበወከበ /karaab-a wakaba/ "he bought an ox"; ከራብወከበ /karaabwakaba/ "an ox bought". The suffix -a can also function as a marker of goal obliques: ጋረመጣ /gaar-a mat'a/ "he came home"; ጋረመጣ /gaarmat'a/ "a house came".

C. Translation problems related to lexical issues

In some cases, the educational materials exhibit simple translation errors where multiple senses of one word in Amharic are assumed to exist in the corresponding word in Silt'e. These sorts of errors can result to misleading statements.

(3) Amharic original:

በሽተኛውንጠየቀው /baffitəṇṇawnt'əyyək'əw/ "He visited the patient"

Silt'e translation in textbook:

ኖታመይተሳለይ/*nottaamaytasaalay*/ "He asked the patient"

Correct Silt'e: ኖታመይአንዜይ/*nottaamayanzeey*/ "He visited the patient" (lit. He saw the patient)

In Silt'e, the literal translation equivalent for the Amharic word, ጠየቀ [*t'əyyək'ə*] "he asked", is ተሳለ [*tasaala*]. But ተሳለ does not have the same figurative sense, "visit", as ጠየቀ in Amharic. Hence, the correct translation equivalent for ጠየቀ in this particular case is አንዜ lit. "He saw", but not ተሳለ.

There are a number of other problems. For example, material producers, taking Amharic as a model, are introducing new literal morphologically calqued forms into the textbooks when perfectly good Silt'e forms exist:

(4) Amharic original: መማሪያመጽሐፍ/*məmmariyaməs'haf*/ "textbook"

Amharic-based Silt'e : መቅሬክታብ/*mak'rekitab*/

Correct Silt'e : እቀርቡያንክታብ/*ik'arbuyaankitab*/ "textbook" (a-book-to-learn-with)

(5) Amharic original: ማስተማሪያመጽሐፍ/*mastəmmariyaməs'haf*/ "teachers' guide"

Amharic-based Silt'e : ማቅሬክታብ/*mak'rekitab*/

Correct Silt'e : ያቀርቡያንክታብ /*yaak'arbuyaankitab*/ "teachers guide" (a-book-to-teach-with)

Creating morphological calques like መቅሬ and ማቅሬ based on the Amharic instrumental nouns መማሪያ and ማስተማሪያ is unnecessary. The natural Silt'e expressions exist and are perfectly comprehensible. The equivalent Silt'e expressions for these Amharic examples are achieved through the use of a relative clause in the imperfective aspect with the non-direct object marker -ቡ[-*bu*].

D. Factors adversely affecting the quality of silt'e materials

In the discussion below, a number of the most important factors which have contributed to the poor quality of the Silt'e educational materials will be discussed.

E. Lack of training and resources

The lack of training for the material creators is one of the most crucial concerns. The key problem seems to be lack of professional knowledge and experience. None of the eight material producers and editors was trained in the Silt'e language or in translation principles. The poor quality of texts is a direct result of the lack of competent authors and translators. Furthermore, material producers and editors work in a situation where no professional support is available and where there are no professional consultants to work with. The lack of training is not purely in language-related matters or development of pedagogy. Those who are developing these materials need training on Silt'e culture as well.

The lack of reference materials is also a contributing factor to the poor quality of the materials. The Silt'e orthography is not fully standardized; there is no Silt'e pedagogical grammar book available. Most of what is available is written for an academic linguistic audience.

Material producers and editors are just provided with syllabi, and educational materials written in Amharic. The translations are based on Amharic grammar – word by word, even morpheme by morpheme – resulting in the sorts of misleading constructions surveyed above.

F. Lack of a central overseeing and coordinating agency

Lacking a central overseeing and coordinating agency is another major challenge. There is no established institution to manage the problems during the production of text materials or to re-examine them and make the necessary corrections.

Achieving standardization in orthography is unlikely where such an organization does not exist. There is no system in place to check whether the materials conform to the structure of

Silt'e grammatically as well as semantically or culturally, no means to manage or to control the introduction of technical terms.

The lack of such an institution lets the material producers go their own ways resulting in all the problems discussed above.

G. Production methodology

In the production process, the Silt'e materials undergo three phases (each of which is a potential point for introducing errors):

- a. Material producers prepare hand-written drafts.
- b. The editors edit the drafts, make necessary corrections, and rewrite the draft, preparing it for typing.
- c. The typing process (by office secretaries) may lead to possible omissions and additional spelling mistakes or errors; most typists are neither mother tongue speakers of Silt'e nor trained in Silt'e orthography. There is a time constraint as well; most spelling errors are likely to occur at this stage.

The production process consumes time and money and could easily result in increased errors, as each phase is further removed from those who made the original Silt'e translations. At the very least, a final proofreading by native speaker experts is needed after the typing phase.

H. Time constraints

Time constraints are another challenge. First, because of very narrow budget horizons, the time given for material productions (usually less than a year) is insufficient. This results in a hurried and high-stress work environment. Second, most individuals involved in this process are from different offices and do not work solely on Silt'e material production; they have their own jobs to carry out in their respective work places. As a result, the material producers do not have sufficient time to work together as a team. Rather than working together to ensure accuracy, the workers typically divide the work among themselves, with each one working independently.

To the factors discussed above one must add that the low salaries for those producing the educational materials have not helped in attracting the most qualified individuals to join the language development project.

3. Conclusion: rethinking silt'e language development

As the discussion above illustrates, the language development in Silt'e is confronted with a number of challenges. The quality of the materials themselves, excluding everything else, is significant enough to adversely affect the teaching-learning process. At this point, it seems that educational decision-making is not shaped by conscious planning and consultation with professionals. It is important for all concerned to learn from the past and work to reshape the future of Silt'e language development.

The problems in developing educational materials for Silt'e mother tongue education reflect the prevalent situation in Ethiopia. What is happening with the Silt'e language materials is just one example of what is going wrong in mother tongue education across Ethiopia.

Currently, mother tongue education is a burning issue in Ethiopia where the mismatch between the needs and available resources is wide. Ethiopia has more than 80 languages. This big number of languages constitutes a challenge in itself (Mutasa 2006: 60-93); presently, about 25 languages are used as mediums of instruction in their respective linguistic areas, competing over scarce resources. Other linguistic groups are demanding to use their mother tongues in schools. Some of these languages are not yet well-studied.

Furthermore, this case study confirms what (Chumbow 1987) claimed more generally for language development planning in Africa. In the majority of cases, according to (Chumbow 1978):

a) Policy decisions are taken without taking sociolinguistic fact-findings as input to policy formulation

b) Planning activities are the results of the personal efforts of individuals and private organizations

c) The efforts are not coordinated because of lack of a recognized central agency empowered to give directions to all efforts of standardization, etc.

d) As a result of lack of coordination and central agency, language planning activities are undertaken by amateurs without training and with no sense of orientation. (Chumbow 1987:15-22)

Generally, mother tongue education requires a huge investment of resources, including time, money, and effort. In the African context, a continent with about 2000 languages, however, the mismatch between the needs and available resources is wide indeed. The needs are many while available resources are scarce. There is a clear lack of training for those involved in materials production, institutional experience is meager, and organizational capacity as well as financial capability is low.

To overcome the challenges inherent in language development, coordinated effort as well as effective management is necessary. The following three suggestions are intended to provide direction for first steps:

1) To promote and coordinate the language development, an authorized institution, like a language academy or language committee, needs to be established. Language planning practices are more successful when they are directed at monitored language use (Fasold 1984:262). Advisory bodies are needed to ensure that printed materials conform to standard norms (Wolff 2000:332-342).

2) Language development programs must be well planned: necessary preparation (including research) must be made; sufficient time must be budgeted; more capacity building is necessary – material producers and curriculum developers and others need to be equipped with necessary technical and professional skills.

3) All stakeholders (government authorities, NGOs) have to combine their available resources and efforts and work together as a team.

Certainly, it is clear that language development, and specifically the development of mother tongue educational materials, has the potential to offer many benefits to communities of speakers who have not enjoyed such opportunities in the past. It is because of the importance of language development that the task itself must be undertaken with utmost seriousness and with all professional care to insure that the most salient feature of a people's identity is not misrepresented or maligned.

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ⁱ The Silt'e grammar has been described in Gutt (1997).

Langues et insertion des communautés ethnolinguistiques minoritaires dans les institutions publiques camerounaises: Cas de quatre ministères situées dans la ville de Yaoundé au Cameroun

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Résumé

Le présent article se propose d'évaluer la situation sociolinguistique dans l'administration des affaires publiques camerounaises relativement aux attentes du Plan d'Action Linguistique pour l'Afrique (PALA), d'examiner les compétences linguistiques des fonctionnaires en situation de minorité linguistique dans l'administration et les stratégies qu'ils développent pour s'adapter aux langues dominantes de communication et aux usages qui leur sont étrangers.

Introduction

Les chefs d'Etats de l'Union Africaine réunis au sommet de Khartoum en Janvier 2006 ont plébiscité des textes historiques constituant une politique linguistique et une stratégie de mise en œuvre de la politique linguistique de l'Union par les Etats membres. Parmi ces documents figurent:

1. La Charte de la Renaissance Culturelle Africaine (2006)
2. Le Plan d'Action Linguistique pour l'Afrique (2006)

Ces deux textes, initialement adoptés en 1986, envisagent l'intégration des langues africaines à tous les niveaux aussi bien scolaire que dans les services administratifs. A l'heure actuelle, étant donné l'engagement de l'Union Africaine à impliquer les

langues nationales dans l'administration publique, il importe d'évaluer pour tous les pays africains, la mise en œuvre de la triple visée de l'article 13, à savoir l'existence d'une législation appropriée, l'utilisation des langues ethno-communautaires comme moyen de communication officielle dans l'administration publique et la promotion pratique de celle-ci. Alors, depuis l'adoption de la première version du Plan d'Action Linguistique pour l'Afrique (PALA) en 1986, qu'en est-il 25 ans après? Cette question mérite d'être posée parce que, depuis près de 30 ans, les chercheurs (Tadadjeu 1980, Chumbow 1980, Mba 2002, etc.) s'appesantissent sur l'éducation et la scolarisation en langues africaines. A l'inverse, le rôle des langues africaines dans l'administration publique, partie intégrante du PALA, semble être négligé. Aussi, paraît-il intéressant d'investiguer sur l'utilisation des langues (officielles et nationales) et les stratégies d'insertion des fonctionnaires en minorité linguistique dans les services publics.

Au terme de cette étude, grâce à l'usage d'une approche sociolinguistique sont suggérés, un profil sociolinguistique de l'usage des langues dans l'administration publique, des moyens d'insertion des fonctionnaires non locuteurs des langues majoritaires, des formes de renforcement des politiques linguistiques des secteurs publics en milieu plurilingue camerounais nécessaires pour le renforcement du processus de mise en œuvre de cette politique de l'organisme continental.

Ces politiques de renforcement découlent de la passion des hommes et des femmes qui se déplacent en quête d'un avenir meilleur pour eux et de leurs familles. Dans leur déplacement, ils emportent avec eux des histoires tribales et linguistiques singulières différentes de celles de la société d'accueil. Ces hommes et ces femmes jouent un rôle particulier dans l'administration ; rôle susceptible d'évoluer dans le temps et dans l'espace.

Questionnements sur les études antérieures et les politiques linguistiques

Le Cameroun atteste une situation d'hétérogénéité linguistique complexe avec environ deux cent soixante-huit langues nationales symbolisant la plupart des phylums recensés par Greenberg (1963). Administrativement, il est un Etat unitaire fractionné en dix régions, chacune comptant un certain nombre de départements et d'arrondissements. Dans toutes ces régions, les langues officielles seraient utilisées de manière fonctionnelle par une population d'environ vingt millions d'habitants. A l'opposé, les langues locales camerounaises se partagent les régions rurales ou semi-urbaines. Avec l'urbanisation sans cesse croissante des villes de Yaoundé et Douala, les langues nationales y semblent moins utilisées. Pour des raisons de promotion et d'insertion des langues locales dans le système éducatif camerounais, des études antérieures comme celles d'Assoumou (2007) et Ndibnu-Messina Ethé (2009) s'appuient sur une sociolinguistique scolaire en région rurale et urbaine. Aucune autre ne se fonde uniquement sur les agents des services publics. Ils y sont intervenus en tant que parents d'élèves, locuteurs des langues et par rapport à leurs opinions, leurs attitudes et aptitudes linguistiques et non comme animateurs de l'action publique. Il demeure dès lors plusieurs questions relatives aux moyens d'insertions des communautés ethnolinguistiques minoritaires dans l'administration publique.

Dans l'administration où une communauté ethnolinguistique est prépondérante, comment réagissent les ressortissants d'une communauté ethnolinguistique minoritaires? A l'heure des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC), les fonctionnaires manipulent souvent des ordinateurs, et presque tous se connectent à Internet dans la plupart des services : quelle semble la langue de prédilection des minorités ethnolinguistiques au cours des communications à travers l'Internet? Avec qui ? En effet, si l'instrumentalisation et l'utilisation des langues africaines à l'école et surtout dans l'administration des affaires publiques est légitime et

souhaitable pour la mobilisation des populations rurales au développement, il est également normal de s'interroger sur le sort des langues africaines (en tant que langues minoritaires) dans le cyberspace.

Même là où les langues ethno-communautaires ne sont ni admises ni envisagées dans l'administration publique, le fait que celles-ci soient utilisées de manière informelle pour résoudre certains problèmes administratifs et/ou pour communiquer entre les fonctionnaires partageant le même medium rend indispensable l'évaluation de la dynamique de l'utilisation des langues et son impact sur les performances administratives des fonctionnaires œuvrant pour le développement national.

De la minoration ethnolinguistique dans les services publics

(Laroussi 2002), se joignant à (Marcellesi 1980 : 15), définit le phénomène ethnolinguistique dans l'administration comme, 'un processus de minoration par lequel des systèmes [linguistiques] virtuellement égaux au système officiel [institutionnalisé] se trouvent cantonnés par une politique d'état certes, mais aussi par toutes sortes de ressorts économiques, sociaux dans lesquels il faut inclure le poids de l'histoire, dans une situation subalterne, [...].'

Malgré la cohabitation linguistique apparente dans les services publics, certaines langues sont plus utilisées que d'autres pour des raisons politiques, économiques et sociales. Cette diglossie est manifeste entre le français et l'anglais mais surtout entre le français et les langues nationales. Les langues nationales se trouvent dans une situation de minoration et de surcroît démunies de tous les enjeux socioculturels et économiques.

En choisissant d'exclure les langues locales des services publics, l'État camerounais participe au processus d'abandon de celles-ci et à la sublimation des langues officielles, corroborant par cela même les théories de diglossie linguistique ou de glottophagie de (Brenzinger 1997), (Blanchet

2005) et de tous les chapitres introductifs de la sociolinguistique.

Le français, largement utilisé dans les services publics aussi bien en région francophone qu'anglophone, est une langue dominante. En abandonnant leurs langues maternelles, leurs langues régionales, les anglophones natifs des régions du Sud-Ouest et du Nord-Ouest se laissent assimiler par les procédés, les usages et parlers des régions francophones, majoritaires. Minoritaires et minorisées, ces locuteurs vont jusqu'à rejeter leurs langue officielles première (L01) pour n'utiliser que le français dans les services publics avec lequel ils sont constamment en contact.

Chroniques sociolinguistique et culturelle des minorités ethnolinguistiques

Les déplacements des peuples datent de l'antiquité. Chaque fois que des peuples se retrouvent dans l'incapacité de subvenir décemment à leurs besoins, ils reconnaissent à des Hommes, adultes ou jeunes, la possibilité de voyager et de travailler dans d'autres régions. Aujourd'hui, cette recherche n'est plus l'apanage des seuls hommes rejoints parfois par leurs familles respectives, mais aussi celui des femmes désireuses d'un meilleur avenir pour elles d'abord et pour leurs familles ensuite.

Les migrations des Camerounais originaires des régions rurales convergent vers les régions urbaines et essentiellement dans les capitales politique et économique. Pour des raisons liées à l'histoire, au marché du travail et aux facilités d'installation, Douala et Yaoundé accueillent la majeure partie des migrations. Les populations des Grassfields se retrouvent majoritairement à Douala (pour des raisons économiques) et les nordistes s'installent à Yaoundé (pour des emplois administratifs).ⁱ Les Anglophones, qui constituent qui représentent la minorité en région francophone, lorsqu'originaires du Nord-Ouest préfèrent s'installer dans la capitale politique, Yaoundé (à la recherche des universités d'accueil) et ceux du Sud-Ouest démontrent une inclinaison

pour la capitale économique, Douala (pour des raisons de proximité). Toutes ces personnes sont minoritaires dans leur territoire d'accueil, quoique certains attestent qu'ils soient originaires des Grassfields.

La diversité des populations originaires des régions ci-dessus listées installées dans les capitales, plus particulièrement à Yaoundé, présentent des répertoires langagiers et culturels divers. Malgré qu'ils soient tous des Camerounais, ces populations issues de l'exode rural ont en commun la promotion d'une langue de travail « étrangère » au territoire : le français. Le scénario théorique idéal suivant émerge : un Anglophone installé à Yaoundé, région francophone, apprend en premier lieu le français qui devient sa langue de communication première dans l'administration ; il utilise s'il la maîtrise, sa langue maternelle à la maison alors que l'enfant est placé en formation dans un établissement scolaire anglophone.

En milieu urbain, les adultes prônant la réussite professionnelle à tous les prix délaissent les langues camerounaises qui, elles, en revanche, participent implicitement et insidieusement, à la promotion sociale et professionnelle. Se débarrassant de la part affective des langues locales, les habitudes culturelles se métamorphosent et se diluent dans les nouvelles à acquérir. Les travailleurs, en situation de minorité, condamnent leurs langues et leurs cultures au profit du français.

Méthodologie de la recherche : recueil des données et analyse

La présente étude prend appui sur une enquête sociolinguistique. (Bulot 2007:2007) atteste que le sociolinguiste participe à la 'dénonciation de l'exclusion des minorités sociales pour ce que ce dernier processus produit bien entendu de souffrance individuelle mais aussi de délitement du lien social, du lien communautaire'. Suggérer des pratiques linguistiques destinées à combattre les inégalités et les discriminations sociales chaque fois que les pratiques

linguistiques et culturelles sont impliquées conduit au choix d'une population d'enquête plus large.

Afin d'obtenir un échantillon des travailleurs minoritaires dans la ville de Yaoundé, cinq critères sont privilégiés:

- bien parler et écrire une des langues officielles
- être d'une ethnie non représentative numériquement dans le service, la direction ou le ministère (moins de vingt locuteurs)
- être Anglophone de naissance ou de scolarisation serait un atout en région francophone
- être établi à Yaoundé depuis moins de quinze ans
- avoir moins de quinze ans d'ancienneté au service

Au terme de ce dépouillement, le questionnaire destiné à recueillir les informations sur les représentations linguistiques a été administré pendant trois mois pour donner le temps aux répondants d'y répondre. En sus, une observation des lieux nous permettait à chaque fois de corroborer les faits et les affirmations des sondés. Avant de présenter les résultats de l'analyse, appesantissons-nous sur la population d'enquête.

Population d'enquête

Pour pouvoir obtenir l'échantillon de la présente recherche, des entretiens semi-directifs auprès de 350 fonctionnaires, tous grades et ethnies confondus, nous n'avons pas pu retenir un échantillon suffisamment fiable pour marquer la minoration car seuls 100 semblaient correspondre aux critères de sélection. Obligés de considérer les identités revendiquées par les locuteurs des langues officielles, la deuxième enquête par questionnaire écrit permet l'ajout de 100 personnes (représentant des minorités linguistiques anglophones principalement) issues de quatre ministères différents (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, Ministère de la Justice, Ministère de l'Education de Base, Ministère des Postes et Télécommunications).ⁱⁱ Leur âge varie entre 18 et 55 ans. Mais la tranche d'âge la plus active se situe entre 35 et 55 ans. Leur expérience professionnelle semble être la plus grande, elle

avoisine généralement vingt ans. Toutefois, 50% des enquêtés disposent d’une expérience professionnelle nichée dans la tranche de un à dix ans. On postule qu’ils se sont adaptés à toutes les situations y compris celles dans lesquelles ils représentent des minorités ethnolinguistiques.

Une vingtaine de groupes linguistiques issus des dix régions camerounaises ont été recensés. Malgré l’impression d’éparpillement linguistique, quatre régions dominent incontestablement la portion de la minorité ethnolinguistique à Yaoundé (milieu francophone) comme cela est schématisé dans le tableau ci-dessous.

Francophones		Anglophones	
Nord	5,25%	Sud-Ouest	8,5%
Est	4,25%	Nord-Ouest	10,5%
Total	9,5%	Total	19%
Reste des Régions			71,5%

Tableau 18.1 : Quelle est votre région d’origine ?

Les Anglophones, minoritaires en espace francophone, représentent 19% des enquêtés. Néanmoins, 3 des enquêtés originaires des régions francophones, mais par éducation, Anglophones, amplifient le pourcentage des Anglophones qui atteint le seuil d’environ 21%. Les Francophones, en minorité dans l’administration, n’influencent pas les résultats de l’enquête. Toutefois, si certaines discriminations naissent du fait de l’appartenance ethnique, alors ces 9, 5% de Francophones sont potentiellement importants.

Nous avons pu obtenir cette assertion du fait d’une assertion lors de la première enquête de certains interviewés dans chaque ministère. En répondant à la question « comment s’opère les propositions de nominations ? Plus clairement, quels sont les critères qui servent pour s’assurer d’une potentielle nomination ? » Ils déclarent, « même si on est compétent, il est mieux de l’être et de parler « le patois » du chef. On sait quand même que certains (mais très peu) proposent leurs porteurs de sacs ou ceux qui travaillent jusqu’à

minuit, mais nous, on sait qu'il faut d'abord être du village du chef ».

Du fait de cette déclaration, nous avons pu établir que certaines directions communiquaient en fulfulde et français principalement (rendant les autres locuteurs minoritaires), en bulu dans un autre ministère ou encore en éwondo. Nous n'avons pas investigué les raisons pour lesquelles les autres ethnies gouvernantes utilisaient leurs langues maternelles dans des circonstances plus intimes et le français dans la majorité d'autres cas avec les non-locuteurs de leurs langues maternelles. Du moins, l'observation générale demeure : l'entourage majoritaire d'un chef provient généralement de son ethnie et semble communiquer principalement en français.

Toutes ces circonstances ont affectés notre échantillon. En résumé, 30 agents représentent la minorité ethnolinguistique dans les Ministères faisant l'objet de l'enquête. Ils perçoivent différemment les politiques linguistiques en vigueur dans les services publics.

Quelques résultats

a. Application des politiques linguistiques non discriminatoires

Sur la base de la Constitution camerounaise, les politiques linguistiques en vigueur envisagent l'utilisation égale des deux langues officielles dans les services publics. En revanche, la répartition régionale prônée de manière informelle par les représentants du gouvernement, exige une répartition des fonctionnaires dépendamment des zones linguistiques ⁱⁱⁱ, entraîne inéluctablement l'abandon progressif de l'une des deux langues. En effet, les Anglophones, qui cohabitent avec les Francophones, estiment que les faveurs accordées aux employés résultent de l'appartenance ethnique du chef hiérarchique. Les tableaux ci-dessous illustrent les réponses des enquêtés quant à l'effectivité de l'application des textes de lois, relatives à cette problématique, dans les services publics.

Oui	Non
62,5%	37,5%
Population interrogée : 100	

Tableau 18.2 : Pensez-vous que les Francophones et les Anglophones soient traités de manière similaire dans l’administration à Yaoundé ?

Il ressort de ce tableaux que 62, 5% des enquêtés pensent que les Anglophones et les Francophones subissent un même traitement. Ils jouissent des mêmes droits et devoirs, obligations et avantages et tous travaillent pour une même nation. A l’inverse, 37, 5% des sondés certifient que les francophones tendent à imposer leur langue et leur culture dans l’administration publique camerounaise. Aussi, pour eux, la langue française semble dominante dans l’administration. Certains Anglophones vont plus loin en affirmant que la non maîtrise de l’anglais par la majorité des Francophones dresse des barrières de haine et d’animosité entre les deux groupes linguistiques.

Oui	Non
37,5%	62,5%
Population interrogée : 100	

Tableau 18.3: Etes-vous satisfait(s) des politiques linguistiques appliquées actuellement ?

La situation des langues officielles, elle, semble être paradoxale dans la mesure où deux langues supposées servir de medium ne bénéficient pas d’un traitement équitable, si bien que les locuteurs se sentant minorisés expriment leur mécontentement. Nous pouvons ainsi dire que les politiques linguistiques, à en croire les différentes assertions, ne sont pas convenablement assumées. Dans ce cas, après une analyse de l’appartenance ethnique des répondants, on pourrait se risquer de dire que les enquêtés alléguant le contraire proviennent généralement de la majorité ethnique gouvernante, locuteurs d’une même langue locale et d’une même langue officielle.

b. Compétences linguistiques, utilisation des langues et performances administratives

Le trilinguisme (Tadadjeu 1982) et le quadrilinguisme (Tabi-Manga 2000) présentent de grands avantages au regard de nouvelles réformes éducatives stipulant l'enseignement des langues et cultures camerounaises au secondaire depuis 2008. Toutefois, cet état d'esprit n'est nullement partagé dans les services publics. *A priori*, l'absence de compétence en deux ou plusieurs langues freine ou retarde le traitement de l'information étant donné que l'on est souvent contraint de recourir à un interprète pour résoudre cette lacune. Analyser les compétences linguistiques des fonctionnaires et les lieux d'utilisation des langues permet d'établir un lien entre la performance linguistique et le rendement administratif.

c. Maîtrise des langues et rendement professionnel

Le problème de traitement de l'information dans les services publics ne repose pas seulement sur la gestion de l'équilibre entre les langues officielles. Elle s'appuie aussi sur la maîtrise des langues africaines qui facilitent la résolution de certains problèmes administratifs liés à une maîtrise incertaine des langues officielles. Comment et pourquoi utiliser les langues camerounaises? Afin d'appréhender les compétences linguistiques des agents interrogés, les questions posées aux enquêtés produisent les résultats répartis dans les tableaux ci-après.

Langues Niveau	Français	Anglais	Votre LM	Une LN	Langue Européenne/ étrangère
Mal	10,5%	40,5%	00%	22,5%	25%
Passable	25%	12,5%	02%	25%	35%
Assez bien	14,5%	12,5%	25%	22,5%	25%
Bien	14,5%	9,5%	47%	14,5%	15%
Très bien	35,5%	25%	25%	04,5%	00%
Population interrogée : 30					

Tableau 18.4 : Quelle(s) langue(s) parlez-vous ?

Langues	Français	Anglais	Votre LM	Langue Européenne étrangère
Pourcentage	100%	62,5%	25%	12,5%
Population interrogée : 30				

Tableau 18.5: Quelle(s) langue(s) écrivez et lisez-vous ?

Le français, langue la mieux maîtrisée dans l'administration publique, dame le pion aux langues africaines en région francophone, car seuls 25% de ceux qui se déclarent avoir une aptitude en langue africaine l'écrivent. Même si la quasi-totalité des adultes fonctionnaires font usage de leurs LM, au niveau du traitement de l'information, tous les besoins s'expriment dans les deux langues officielles.

Oui	Non	Abstention
47,5%	50%	2,5%
Population interrogée : 30		

Tableau 18.6 : La connaissance d'une langue autre que la vôtre vous a-t-elle déjà aidé dans l'administration ?

Malgré que les répondants préfèrent traiter l'information en français, ils attestent que la connaissance de plusieurs langues produit des résultats positifs sur la qualité du traitement des dossiers. Toutefois, seuls 47,5% des sondés confirment de la nécessité d'une maîtrise orale et écrite d'autres langues pour le traitement de l'information contenue dans les dossiers. Pour près de 50% de la population, la connaissance d'une autre langue n'impacte pas sur la gestion des dossiers ou sur une potentielle faveur à obtenir. Les langues locales cohabitent avec le français dans d'autres circonstances, notamment celles informelles. Dans l'administration, elles ne s'emploient que dans des situations extrêmes. Par exemple, selon un des interviewés, lorsque le « *chef veut traiter des données financières avec un agent qui partage la même langue* » ou lorsqu'il voudrait mettre ses collaborateurs en confiance. En définitive, les langues officielles s'offrent la primeur dans l'exercice de la communication interpersonnelle intra-

ministérielle et le français est la langue majoritairement utilisée dans l'administration.

d. Choix et usage des langues dans l'administration

La constitution de 1996, entérinant celles antérieures, précise que les langues de communication officielles sont le français et l'anglais. Néanmoins, certains usagers communiquent uniquement en langues locales et les récents recrutements^{iv} ne tiennent pas compte des compétences linguistiques du personnel administratif. Quelles langues tous les employés préfèrent-ils utiliser ? Pour quelles raisons? Pour essayer d'apporter des éléments de réponse, les quatre tableaux ci-dessous présentent les pratiques langagières des agents des services publics s'adressant aux usagers, aux collègues et/ou aux ami(e)s.

Langues Niveau	Français	Anglais	Votre LM	Une LN	Langue Européenne étrangère	Avec qui
Très peu	00%	50%	50%	00%	12,5%	Usagers
Souvent	37,5%	12,5%	25%	12,5%	00%	et collègues
Toujours	62,2%	00%	00%	00%	00%	
Population interrogée : 30						

Tableau 18.7 : Quelle(s) langue(s) utilisez-vous au bureau ?

Langues	Français	Anglais	Votre LM	Une LM+L01
Pourcentage	25%	25%	12,5%	37,5%
Population interrogée : 30				

Tableau 18.8 : Quelle(s) langue(s) utilisez-vous avec vos collègues de même langue ?

Langues	Français	Anglais	Votre LM	LM+LO1	LM+PIDGIN
Pourcentage	12,5%%	00%	25%	50%	12,5%
Population interrogée : 30					

Tableau 18.9 : Quelle(s) langue(s) utilisez-vous lorsque vous rencontrez des personnes qui ne maîtrisent ni le français, ni l'anglais ?

Langues	Français	Anglais	Votre LM	Une LM+LO1	LM+LO1+LO2+Pidgin
Pourcentage	62,5%	00%	12,5%	25%	12,5%
Population interrogée : 30					

Tableau 18.10 : Quelle(s) langue(s) utilisez-vous avec vos ami(e)s dans les services publics ?

En dépit de la prédominance du français dans les rapports écrits, l'anglais dessert les communications orales. Néanmoins, la LM et la LO1 semblent être les plus utilisées dans l'administration en matière d'échanges langagiers avec les collègues et les personnes qui ne parlent ni le français ni l'anglais. Toutefois, les agents en situation de minorité et sans postes de décision préfèrent employer le français (62,5%), langue qu'ils jugent appropriée pour leur intégration dans l'administration. 25% d'entre eux préfèrent associer leur LM et l'anglais lorsqu'ils communiquent avec leurs collègues de même langue. Lorsqu'ils estiment que ceux-ci font partie de leur cercle d'amis, ils remplacent l'anglais par le Pidgin-English. Les répondants déclarent qu'utilisée dans les services publics, la langue maternelle les secourt pour les raisons suivantes :

- sollicitations diverses, plus particulièrement des services ;
- conservation d'une confidentialité ;
- commodités personnelles et marques de fraternité (échanges fraternels) ;
- rendre la politesse aux interlocuteurs ;
- facilitation de l'accomplissement des tâches quotidiennes ;
- compréhension des sollicitations de la hiérarchie ;
- distribution du courrier et rapport oralement aux intéressés.

Tous constatent qu'ils emploient le français plus constamment que toute autre langue en présence pour des raisons d'intégration et de transmission facile des idées.

e. Attitudes et représentations face aux langues nationales

Plusieurs questions orientent l'analyse des attitudes et représentations des populations minoritaires face à l'usage des langues maternelles dans les services publics parmi lesquelles les raisons d'utilisation des LM. Les tableaux suivants mettent en exergue les réponses des sondés.

Pour collaborer avec vos collègues	Pour aider les usagers qui partagent ma LM	Pour comprendre les tenants et les aboutissants de certains dossiers	abstention
25%	62,5%%	00%	12,5%
Population interrogée : 30			

Tableau 18.11 : Pourquoi utilisez-vous les langues maternelles ?

62, 5% des sondés emploient les LM pour assurer une meilleure collaboration avec leurs collègues de même tribu. En revanche, aucun n'affirme utiliser les LM pour appréhender les tenants et les aboutissants d'un dossier afin de mieux le traiter. Se sentant en minorité, certains agents sont plus enclins à assister les usagers qui partagent leurs LM et acheminer l'information plus rapidement.

Pour	Contre
37,5%	62,5%
Population interrogée : 30	

Tableau 18.12: Serez-vous pour ou contre une utilisation officielle des langues maternelles dans l'administration ?

37,5% des interrogés ont une attitude favorable quant à une légitimation des LN dans l'administration car, cela faciliterait

les échanges avec les moins instruits et favoriserait l’obtention des confidences devant/au milieu des étrangers, et garantirait une communication exempte d’ambiguïtés entre les interlocuteurs. D’autres prônent une restauration de l’identité culturelle et un début de construction identitaire sur des bases solides. A l’opposé, 62, 5% évoquent des propos contraires en se référant au multilinguisme qui entrave le choix d’une seule langue d’administration. De fait, le choix d’une langue nationale favorise et légitime le tribalisme et le clanisme à outrance. Il est à noter que les personnes issues des ethnies minoritaires dans ladite administration sont majoritairement contre.

Votre LM	Une langue camerounaise	Conserver les LO
12,5%	50% Ewondo(15%) Bulu (10%) Ffulde (15%) Duala (10%)	37,5%

Tableau 18.13: Quelle(s) langue(s) recommanderiez-vous pour améliorer la qualité du traitement de l’information dans l’administration ?

En cas de légitimation des LN, 50% des sondés adopteraient une langue autre que la leur. Ils entérineraient l’ewondo, le ffulde, le bulu et le duala. Néanmoins, 37,5% des sondés préfèrent conserver leurs LO.

Les TICs et langues nationales dans l’administration

La majeure partie des bureaux équipés d’ordinateurs sont dotés d’une connexion internet. Les agents semblent être libres de communiquer dans la langue de leur choix avec d’autres internautes ainsi que cela apparaît dans les tableaux suivants.

Langues Niveau	Français	Anglais	Votre LM
Très peu	12,5%	00%	12,5%
Souvent	37,5%	25%	00%

Toujours	50%	12,5%	00%
Jamais	00%	00%	37,5%
Population interrogée : 30			

Tableaux 18.14 : Dans quelle langue envoyez-vous souvent vos mails ?

Tableau 18.14a : À vos amis, amis et famille

	Langues:	Français	Anglais	Votre LM
Niveau				
Très peu		12,5%	00%	12,5%
Souvent		12,5%	37,5%	00%
Toujours		50%	12,5%	00%
Jamais		00%	00%	50%
Population interrogée : 30				

Tableau 18.14b: À vos collègues

Le français et l'anglais représentent les langues les plus employées par les agents des services publics. Malgré la dernière place qu'occupent les langues nationales, ceux qui l'utilisent se servent des livres en LM et des dictionnaires L01-LM afin de transcrire les sons produits en LM. En marge, seuls 10, 5% des agents interrogés attestent d'une connaissance des logiciels de transcription des langues africaines comme le tableau ci-après l'illustre.

Oui	Non	Abstention
10,5%	75,5%	14,5%
Population interrogée : 30		

Tableau 18.15 : Avez-vous un logiciel qui vous aide ? Si oui, lequel ?

Le logiciel le plus couramment utilisé semble *keyman*. La SIL met à la disposition du grand public, des programmes installant dans les ordinateurs, des polices de caractères correspondant

au système d'écriture des langues africaines. Parmi ces programmes, ils énoncent *Keyman net Charis SIL* qui sont en fait des contenus d'UNICODE. Les employés des services publics ne sont pas édifiés sur la nature des programmes qui permettent une saisie en langue africaine.

Stratégies d'adaptation des fonctionnaires

Les fonctionnaires façonnent eux-mêmes un profil sociolinguistique qui garantit leur insertion et une meilleure rentabilité administrative. Les Anglophones travaillant en milieu francophone, en tant que minorités linguistiques, développent plusieurs stratégies d'insertion. Sachant que le français est la langue dominante dans les services publics à Yaoundé, ils s'emploient par exemple à :

- s'inscrire dans des centres pilotes et structures de formation linguistique ;
- communiquer fréquemment et principalement avec les locuteurs de la langue dominante ;
- améliorer leur niveau de langue à travers des cours et des *chats* (communications) sur internet ;
- traiter les dossiers dans la langue officielle seconde (pour ceux dont la langue est dominante).

Egalement, pour assister les usagers non locuteurs des langues officielles, les fonctionnaires communiquent par le biais des langues nationales et d'une langue (langue officielle/un pidgin) partiellement maîtrisée par ces derniers. En revanche, les employés des services publics ne devraient pas être les uniques concernés par les voies et moyens d'adaptation des minorités linguistiques. L'adaptation passerait par une reconnaissance légale de l'existence des communautés ethnolinguistiques linguistiques minoritaires.

Pour une intégration des minorités ethnolinguistiques dans les services publics

En se référant aux résultats des linguistes (Bitjaa Kody 2004) qui déclarent qu'il n'existe aucune langue locale majoritaire au Cameroun, on penserait que le « Linguicide » ne se borne qu'à des mesures restrictives, forçant les minorités ethnolinguistiques à n'employer que le français en milieu francophone et l'anglais en milieu anglophone. Le « Linguicide » se commet également par diverses actions de nature à détruire partiellement la langue d'une collectivité. Le gouvernement qui se refuse à reconnaître l'existence des langues minoritaires et à légaliser les langues africaines dans les services publics, impose aux groupes ethnolinguistiques des situations linguistiques et culturelles difficiles. Une simple observation de la situation dans les services administratifs laisse entrevoir la prédominance de certaines communautés ethnolinguistiques dans des ministères données et étiquetés comme tels par les populations riveraines.

Aussi, l'Etat, garant de l'égalité entre les peuples, se doit-il d'envisager des voies et moyens d'intégration des communautés ethnolinguistiques minoritaires à travers, par exemple, le vote des lois qui stipulent qu'en cas de minorité, les agents de l'Etat bénéficieraient d'une formation linguistique adéquate dans des centres linguistiques spécialisés et mettrait sur pied des commissions d'enquête sur la gestion des minorités dans l'administration publique. Enfin et non des moindres, les gouvernants pourraient adopter une ou des langue(s) locale(s) unificatrice(s) utilisables dans l'administration. En plébiscitant une ou des langue(s) nationale(s), l'Etat s'engagerait pleinement à implémenter les recommandations du PALA.

Les communautés ethnolinguistiques minoritaires elles-mêmes

Certains agents réprouvent une vive insertion des minorités linguistiques par crainte qu'ils ne renoncent eux-mêmes à leur

langue et culture d'origine, c'est pourquoi ils ne manifestent aucun intérêt à l'apprentissage ou à l'utilisation de la langue majoritaire.

Mais, lorsque la situation de dominance s'installe durablement, et que la langue dominante se fait un vecteur de promotion sociale et administrative et, surtout, si elle est également porteuse des traits de la modernité, les agents des groupes minoritaires devraient collaborer avec la classe/la langue dominante pour s'assurer une ascension socio-professionnelle. Paradoxalement, les fonctionnaires des communautés ethnolinguistiques linguistiques minoritaires garantissent la promotion des langues dominantes (et également leur assimilation) mais aussi, ils conservent leurs propres patrimoines linguistique et culturel. En prenant conscience de leur minorité, ils deviennent responsables de la transmission et de la conservation de leurs langues et cultures.

Conclusion

Ce tour d'horizon des communautés ethnolinguistiques minoritaires dans quelques ministères de la ville de Yaoundé et leurs stratégies d'adaptation et même d'appropriation des langues et cultures dominantes dans les institutions publiques camerounaises a contribué à recenser les communautés ethnolinguistiques majoritaires à Yaoundé. Il s'agit des locuteurs originaires des régions du Centre, du Sud, de l'Ouest, de l'Extrême-Nord, du Littoral et de l'Adamaoua. Les Francophones se retrouvent en minorité dans certains services ministériels en tant que représentant de leurs ethnies ou régions (comme le Nord et l'Est). Les Anglophones le demeurent dans les régions francophones même si on dénombre des anglophones non originaires de ces deux régions.

La langue dominante, le français, est perçue comme langue de l'élite, langue de réussite socioprofessionnelle mais aussi comme langue d'insertion et d'adaptation sociale. Aussi, les minorités développent-elles des stratégies de manipulation des langues dominantes aussi bien occidentales qu'africaines afin

de briser les barrières linguistiques. Il serait donc louable de la part de l'Etat de prendre conscience de l'existence des minorités ethnolinguistiques et mettre en œuvre des voies et moyens d'adaptation de celles-ci.

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ⁱVoir recensement de la population de 2006

ⁱⁱCes 100 personnes additives ont été interviewées par écrit entre Septembre et novembre 2012. En fait, après une analyse des questionnaires distribués à près de 350 personnes, une centaine seulement répondait aux critères de minorité ethnolinguistique que nous nous sommes fixés.

ⁱⁱⁱVoir les résultats des concours nationaux (ENS, ENSET, ENAM, etc.) de la création à nos jours, chaque région est représentée à équivalence d'un pourcentage donné.

^{iv}Recrutement des 25000 employés d'état.

Les défis inhérents à l'intellectualisation des langues africaines: le cas d'une langue Camerounaise, le Yambetta

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Résumé

Les exigences de la vie contemporaine incitent à faire acquérir aux populations africaines une mentalité moderne face au développement effréné des sciences et techniques. Pour élever et étendre le niveau de connaissance des Africains, il devient urgent de promouvoir l'intellectualisation des langues nationales. Toutefois, ce processus n'est pas exempt d'un certain nombre de défis. La description de l'expérience du yambetta nous montre que les défis inhérents à l'intellectualisation des langues africaines se résument à une intégration ou une appropriation locale effective des connaissances nouvelles. Pour relever ces défis, nous préconisons une approche de la traduction et de la terminologie qui intégrerait les communautés linguistiques concernées. Mais au-delà d'une telle démarche, cette initiative demeurerait invraisemblable dans un contexte multilingue comme celui du Cameroun, si l'aménagement linguistique en vigueur ne permet pas aux langues nationales de remplir les fonctions vitalisantes de langues d'enseignement.

Mots clés : *intellectualisation – langues africaines – traduction – terminologie culturelle – aménagement linguistique.*

Abstract

The demands of contemporary life require that Africans should embrace modern mentality in the face of unbridled development in science and technology. To elevate and expand the level of knowledge of Africans, it becomes imperative to promote the intellectualization of African languages. Nevertheless, this process is not without a number of challenges. The description of the yambetta experience shows that these challenges which are inherent in the intellectualization of African languages sum up in an effective local integration or appropriation of modern knowledge. To overcome these challenges, we recommend an approach in the domain of translation and terminological development, which integrates the different linguistic communities concerned. Yet, beyond such an approach, this initiative would unlikely be in a multilingual context like the case of Cameroon, if the prevailing language planning does not permit national languages to fulfil the vitalizing functions of languages that are used in teaching.

Keywords: Intellectualization – African languages – translation – cultural terminology – language planning.

1. Introduction

Pendant des décennies, la situation linguistique en Afrique a été caractérisée par une exclusion des langues africaines des secteurs privilégiés de la société comme l'éducation, l'administration. La politique au niveau de chaque État évitait de s'occuper des langues nationales, question trop sensible face à une volonté de plus en plus manifeste des grandes puissances d'étendre leur zone d'influence dans l'épanouissement culturel des peuples africains. Toutefois, à l'heure de la mondialisation où l'intérêt pour les questions d'identité culturelle est plus accentué que jamais, la plupart des États africains sont résolument engagés à élaborer et à mettre en œuvre des politiques linguistiques nationales appropriées, dans l'optique de développer les langues africaines, et ce sous les auspices de

l'Union africaine. C'est ce que (Alexander 2003: 24) appelle '*the changing political climate in Africa*'. Les activités implicites de la politique linguistique de l'Union africaine se résument et s'expliquent en quatre dimensions, notamment l'instrumentation, la revitalisation, la revalorisation et l'intellectualisation des langues africaines (Chumbow 2008 : 93). La présente communication s'intéresse à un certain nombre de défis inhérents au dernier aspect de cette dynamique.

2. Le problème

Au moment où l'Afrique est engagée à intégrer les langues et cultures de ses terroirs dans le système éducatif et dans le système de communication à tous les niveaux possibles, Il devient urgent d'élever les langues africaines au niveau de la maîtrise de l'expression des concepts et des réalités dans les domaines non traditionnels aussi variés que possible, c'est-à-dire d'équiper ces langues de termes adéquats pour désigner les concepts de l'environnement moderne dans lequel elles se trouvent. En effet, le développement culturel et socio-économique de l'Afrique implique nécessairement un recours aux langues des terroirs comme moyens de communication appropriés et efficaces des réalités modernes. C'est dans ce sillage que l'on parle de plus en plus de l'intellectualisation des langues africaines.

3. Conceptualisation et cadre d'analyse

L'intellectualisation des langues est l'ensemble des mesures qui visent l'habilitation et la capacitation des langues à mieux assumer une fonction comme langue de réflexion académique, langue de la recherche, du discours scientifique et d'expression des nouvelles connaissances dans les domaines des sciences et technologies et du savoir universel (Chumbow 2005, Alexander 2005).

En effet, on ne saurait dissocier l'intellectualisation des langues de l'instrumentation, de la revitalisation et de la

revalorisation des langues, étant donné que tous ces concepts constituent un ensemble de mesures et d'actions mises en œuvre pour renforcer l'efficacité, l'efficacité et la capacité intrinsèque des langues, afin qu'elles soient capables d'assumer de nouvelles fonctions dans l'acquisition du savoir et des connaissances technologiques (Chumbow 2008 : 94). En somme, ils sont tous des volets de l'aménagement linguistique qui consistent à hisser les langues à plus d'efficacité dans le domaine intellectuel, le domaine d'acquisition du savoir en général.

Toutefois, l'intellectualisation à laquelle nous nous intéressons particulièrement dans le cadre de cette étude va de pair avec une intense activité de traduction. C'est, entre autres, grâce à la traduction que des termes nouveaux sont créés, dotant ainsi les langues africaines d'une terminologie suffisante pour exprimer la modernité. Mais aussi séduisant que cela puisse paraître, le projet de l'intellectualisation des langues africaines rencontre des préjugés sur la capacité à le réaliser.

4. Des préjugés sur le projet de l'intellectualisation des langues africaines

De nombreuses préoccupations légitimes sont souvent évoquées pour montrer le caractère peu réaliste du projet de l'intellectualisation des langues africaines.

a. La thèse de l'inaptitude des langues africaines dans l'expression de la modernité

L'Occident a fait irruption dans l'histoire des sociétés africaines avec une avalanche de réalités nouvelles si bien qu'aujourd'hui, l'Africain se trouve entouré d'appareils, de gadgets modernes de tous genres dont il suit à peine l'évolution et dont il ne connaît pas le plus souvent l'origine. Plusieurs objets à l'instar du téléphone ou de l'ordinateur, tout comme de nouveaux modes de vie et de pensée sont présents dans un univers linguistique dont il ne peut expliquer l'existence avec son propre instrument linguistique. Et manifestement, il en découle une incapacité d'identification de toute cette terminologie moderne par les langues africaines et partantes,

un manque de terminologie appropriée pour la décrire ou pour en parler.

C'est fort de cela que certains grammairiens peu avisés et certains praticiens des langues européennes ont prétendu que les langues africaines étaient des langues pauvres, eu égard à leur inaptitude à exprimer les réalités modernes ou technoscientifiques supposées très abstraites ou trop techniques pour elles. C'est dans le même sillage que des philosophes européens ont présumé que philosopher n'était pas du ressort des Africains. Pour eux, la philosophie étant européenne (grecque) par essence, les langues africaines ne sauraient être aptes à assumer la fonction de support de la philosophie.

Toutefois, pour taire ce préjugé qui a longuement pesé sur les langues africaines, plusieurs études ont montré que toute langue s'adapte au monde qui l'environne. Si ce monde change, subit une transformation, une évolution, la langue aussi suivra le pas par le développement des termes adéquats à l'expression des réalités nouvelles et des concepts nouveaux. Loin d'être un défi à relever, la thèse de l'inaptitude des langues africaines à exprimer la modernité n'est plus qu'un débat obsolète.

b. L'intraduisibilité

Comme nous l'avons mentionné plus-haut, la modernité serait l'apanage de l'occident. Cette modernité est contenue dans des textes qui sont appelés à être traduits en langues africaines afin d'offrir à ces dernières la possibilité de s'approprier de nouvelles connaissances. Cependant, eu égard au fait que les systèmes linguistiques qui organisent les concepts dans les langues africaines s'éloignent considérablement de ceux des langues européennes, certaines opinions ont certifié l'intraduisibilité dans le rapport langues européennes et langues africaines.

D'aucuns estiment même que la traduction en elle-même est manifestement une tentative de résolution d'une tâche irréalisable, compte tenu de l'anisomorphisme des langues en général. Et s'il se trouve qu'elle n'est pas aisée entre des langues relativement proches culturellement, qu'en sera-t-il des

langues relativement éloignées. Pour Schlegel (cité par Danan 2007 : 63), 'la traduction est un duel à mort où périt inévitablement celui qui traduit ou celui qui est traduit'. Dans le même ordre d'idées, Dante (cité par Danan 2007 : 63) pense qu' ' aucune chose de celles qui ont été mises en harmonie par lien de poésie ne se peut transporter de sa langue en une autre sans qu'on rompe sa douceur et son harmonie'.

Mais de tels arguments ne sauraient s'avérer convaincants pour disqualifier le caractère réaliste de la traduction entre langues européennes et langues africaines au vu de l'évolution des méthodes de traduction. Il en découle en effet que toutes les langues peuvent exprimer chacune le même contenu, traduire chacune la même réalité, permettre d'exprimer chacune les mêmes sentiments, de décrire des faits passés, présents ou à venir, ou expliquer un phénomène. C'est d'ailleurs cet état de choses que Taber et Nida (1971 : 3) argumentent vivement lorsqu'ils disent: 'Toute idée qui peut s'exprimer dans une langue peut s'exprimer dans une autre'. Des années avant, Jakobson (1963 : 84) affirmait déjà que 'les langues diffèrent essentiellement par ce qu'elles *doivent* exprimer, et non par ce qu'elles *peuvent* exprimer. '

Avec Waard et Nida (1996 : 42-44), nous estimons donc que 'la vraie question n'est pas de savoir si la traduction est possible, mais plutôt de savoir comment elle s'accomplit si merveilleusement dans bien des cas'. Une pauvre traduction vers une langue africaine n'est donc pas l'émanation de la pauvreté présumée de cette langue, mais plutôt le résultat de l'ignorance du traducteur.

5. Au-delà des présomptions, des réalités

Les défis que les africanistes ont à relever aujourd'hui dans le processus de l'intellectualisation des langues africaines ne consistent plus à démontrer la faisabilité de la traduction vers les langues africaines ou encore, à prouver que ces langues apparemment dépourvues de concepts peuvent exprimer toute réalité moderne. En effet, toutes les langues peuvent exprimer chacune le même contenu, ou traduire chacune la même

réalité ; mais non loin de là, les langues africaines font face à des défis d'un autre ressort dans le processus de leur intellectualisation.

a. La modernisation des langues

Plusieurs universitaires et organismes publics ou privés s'investissent à moderniser les langues africaines, mais leur approche n'établit pas souvent de passerelle entre la science et les communautés linguistiques concernées. Par conséquent, la plupart de ces travaux demeurent dans des tiroirs, auxquels n'ont accès que les hommes de sciences.

b. Le passage de l'oralité à la scripturalité

Une langue qui aspire à être une langue académique, ou de la recherche, doit avoir une littérature spécialisée foisonnante, ainsi que des usagers qui la consomment au quotidien. Mais, comment amener les Africains à s'accommoder à une telle mouvance?

c. L'aménagement linguistique

Nul n'est sans ignorer que la politique, la planification et l'aménagement linguistiques, sont jusqu'ici instables, timides et au stade des vœux dans la plupart des pays africains, même si de nombreux efforts sont faits pour les rendre actifs et dynamiques. Les nouvelles politiques linguistiques africaines attribuent des fonctions importantes aux *langues officielles*, et spécieusement un statut honorifique mais sans fonctions importantes aux langues *dites nationales* (Bitjaa 2008 : 108). En outre, l'aménagement linguistique dans l'éducation formelle pose de redoutables problèmes, surtout en contexte multilingue, dès lors que les langues doivent avoir une fonction de vecteur d'enseignement.

6. Les prémices de l'expérience du Yambetta

Encore appelé nigi, le yambetta est une langue du Mbam Cameroun, parlée par une minorité de 3700 personnes (Lewis, M., Simons, Gary F. and Fennig, Charles D. (eds.). 2016).

Lewis, M. Paul, Simons, Gary F. and Fennig, Charles D. (eds.). 2016. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Nineteenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

Dans le cadre du programme PANMAPALⁱ (Yaoundé 2008-2010) initié par l'ACALANⁱⁱ, nous nous sommes investi à moderniser la langue yambetta en vue de promouvoir son intellectualisation. Un lexique thématique français-yambetta de 350 termes relatifs au domaine pédagogique a été développé dans la perspective de permettre et faciliter l'utilisation du yambetta comme médium de pédagogie, et une portion du manuel intitulé *Pédagogie des langues maternelles africaines de Tadadjeu, Sadembouo, Mba* (2004) a été traduite pour la didactique en yambetta.

a. Approche de modernisation

Ce travail s'est appuyé sur l'approche interprétative de l'ESIT (Ecole de Paris) encore appelée théorie du sens, qui est fondée sur le processus d'interprétation, de déverbalisation et de reformulation.

b. Démarche

La démarche consistait à bien comprendre le sens des termes en français et les exprimer en yambetta, puis à les tester auprès de quelques locuteurs natifs.

c. Résultats

Les termes pourtant approuvés au préalable par des locuteurs natifs ne sont pas usuels dans la communication de l'ensemble des populations cibles. Par exemple, des concepts qui ont exigé une création lexicale au sens propre du terme comme « point-virgule » ou « triangle isocèle », semblent jusqu'ici être éloignés des réalités des Yambetta qui sont incapables de les exprimer.

Après une auto-évaluation de nos travaux, il se trouve que cet état de choses est dû à plusieurs défaillances :

- l'insuffisance avérée d'une approche de modernisation basée uniquement sur la théorie du sens ;

- le manque d'une définition préalable des besoins et domaines privilégiés des populations concernées;
- le non enseignement du yambetta à l'école ; car « le besoin crée l'organe » dit un adage !

7. Une démarche revisitée

Si l'appropriation effective des connaissances nouvelles est l'objectif majeur de l'intellectualisation d'une langue africaine, la théorie de l'appropriation de Chumbow (2011) pose que ce processus dépend crucialement d'une communication effective dans le médium linguistique choisi. Ainsi dit, il faut qu'une terminologie nouvelle soit adaptée au système communicationnel vivant des Yambetta pour que l'on admette qu'ils se la sont appropriée. Cependant, une approche basée uniquement sur la théorie du sens s'avère insuffisante pour relever le défi de l'appropriation des connaissances. Semengue (2001 : 43, 44) l'approuve si bien quand il dit :

Malheureusement, cette théorie [la théorie du sens], comme toute théorie connaît des limites quand elle est appliquée dans la traduction des textes techniques et scientifiques en général, et notamment vers les langues africaines en particulier en cela que ces textes, discours ont des caractéristiques spécifiques. [...] Pour ce qui est des langues africaines, la théorie du SENS se heurte là à un problème majeur. En effet, si la traduction ne s'occupe que de la parole, du discours et non de la langue, on s'aperçoit qu'en matière de traduction technico-scientifique l'existence des termes habituellement utilisés par les spécialistes du domaine considéré et la connaissance préalable du domaine par le destinataire sont également importantes. Par ailleurs, le niveau de spécialisation terminologique est également à prendre en compte, car il existe des textes techniques ou scientifiques destinés à la vulgarisation dans ces domaines.

Sous ce constat, quelle approche s'avère pratique pour relever le défi de l'appropriation des connaissances ? En outre, dans quelle logique s'inscrirait-on pour parvenir à l'intellectualisation d'une langue comme le yambetta ?

a. L'approche culturelle de la terminologie pour moderniser le Yambetta

Sous l'influence conjointe des domaines théoriques, des développements technologiques et des demandes sociales, la recherche en terminologie est aujourd'hui soumise à des renouvellements. En plus de la dimension lexicale, l'individu et la communauté sont réintégrés dans le processus même de la construction du sens. Différentes théories et approches de la terminologie ont été élaborées, ont évolué, et certaines ont dès lors été mises en œuvre conjointement pour converger vers cette visée. Nous n'allons pas les parcourir dans le cadre de cette communication, néanmoins nous ne saurions ne pas mentionner cette approche qui propose une voie nouvelle adaptée aux langues sans (longue) tradition écrite : la terminologie culturelle.

Conçue par Marcel Diki-Kidiri et Edema Atibakwa, la terminologie culturelle a pour préoccupation centrale de développer les langues à partir de leurs propres ressources de connaissances et d'expériences, ce qui leur permet d'avoir une perception à elles des nouveaux concepts qu'elles voudront dénommer.

Pour la décrire, Diki-Kidiri, chef de file de cette approche, dans son résumé de la table ronde sur 'la terminologie culturelle' présentée lors du colloque ***Terminologie : approches transdisciplinaires*** (2007) affirme :

La terminologie culturelle est fondée sur la manière dont l'être humain acquiert de la connaissance en s'appropriant chaque expérience nouvelle tout au long de sa vie. Par cela, il construit son univers, depuis ses habitudes individuelles jusqu'à ses comportements sociaux grégaires et communautaires. La relation de la terminologie avec la cognition, la psychologie, la sociologie, l'anthropologie culturelle, le droit, la sémasiologie, la linguistique et la communication entre autant en ligne de compte pour le développement de la terminologie que la définition des concepts, la construction du sens et des dénominations. La terminologie culturelle se trouve être ainsi l'un des portails

interdisciplinaires conduisant à l'étude du terme dans la perspective d'un développement humain intégral.ⁱⁱⁱ

La méthode qu'elle préconise nous aura permis de comprendre combien il est nécessaire de procéder à une évaluation des besoins réels et prioritaires de communication des populations concernées par l'intellectualisation de la langue yambetta. C'est ainsi que nous avons opté pour un développement terminologique dans le domaine agricole, identifié comme prioritaire dans la communauté yambetta pour aspirer à une appropriation de connaissances modernes moins dépendante des méandres de l'évolution des planifications éducatives en langues locales au Cameroun. Une telle terminologie, avant d'être ou pendant qu'elle serait utile à l'enseignement dans une « agric-school » ou dans tout autre programme d'éducation formelle, se ferait facilement implanter dans la communauté yambetta dans le cadre d'une campagne d'alphabétisation. L'appropriation en terminologie culturelle est également conditionnée par une implantation des termes développés hors du cadre socio-sectoriel par la formation des adultes. Pour (Diki-Kidiri 2007 : 21) :

... l'enseignement de la langue commune aux adultes est tout à fait indispensable, car on ne peut prétendre développer des terminologies spécialisées dans une langue si l'on néglige par ailleurs de promouvoir une meilleure maîtrise de la langue commune au sein de la société. Il faudrait donc que, parallèlement au développement terminologique, des outils de didactique de la langue soient également élaborés pour en assurer l'enseignement auprès de divers publics, dont les adultes.

b. La traduction dans le passage de l'oralité à la scripturalité

Le yambetta, comme la plupart des langues africaines, demeure à caractère oral. Si l'intellectualisation vise aussi à permettre aux langues africaines de basculer de l'oralité vers la scripturalité, le développement de ces langues dans leur forme écrite ne devrait pas être une fin en soi, il doit utilement

répondre aux besoins des communautés utilisatrices ; et il se trouve que cela peut être effectif par la traduction (Ndongo 1984 : 5).

En effet, la traduction devrait contribuer à la production d'une littérature spécialisée avec laquelle on peut intéresser la population dans toutes ses composantes sociales et professionnelles à consommer la littérature en langue maternelle (Sadembouo 2001 : 84). C'est pourquoi, dans notre cas, des fiches techniques d'agriculture extraites de *La voix du paysan* (2001) ont été traduites en yambetta, avec la collaboration de quelques ingénieurs agronomes et d'autres locuteurs compétents en yambetta.

c. Nécessite d'une réforme linguistique dans le secteur éducatif camerounais

Au Cameroun, la politique linguistique (adoptée le 02 juin 1972 et modifiée en 1996, en 2006 et en 2008) œuvre pour la protection et la promotion de toutes les langues nationales ; autrement dit, elle n'envisagerait aucunement l'exclusion d'une langue de l'éducation. Des modèles ont été développés par des linguistes camerounais dans ce sillage; toutefois l'utilisation des langues dans le système éducatif actuel n'est pas conforme aux dispositions des lois de la République en la matière et les textes organisant l'utilisation des langues dans le secteur de l'éducation sont obsolètes au regard des lois en vigueur. Cette obsolescence du système éducatif actuel en matière de langues d'enseignement ou de langues enseignées se manifeste par l'application unilatérale de la politique du bilinguisme officiel et la non prise en compte des langues nationales dont l'enseignement est pourtant instruit par le Chef de l'État, S.E Paul BIYA, par la Constitution de 1996, et par la Loi d'Orientation de l'Éducation au Cameroun de 1998 (BitjaaKody2011 : 2). Par conséquent, le yambetta n'est pas enseigné formellement.

D'aucuns nous ont demandé en quoi il leur serait utile d'exprimer en yambetta des concepts comme « démonstratif, triangle isocèle, proposition subordonnée », alors que même leurs enfants qui vont à l'école en zone rurale n'apprennent cela

qu'en français. Il n'y avait donc aucun intérêt pour eux de chercher à s'approprier de telles réalités. Toutefois, nous avons pensé que ces travaux relatifs au domaine pédagogique seront utiles lorsque le yambetta fera effectivement partie intégrante des programmes d'enseignement formels du secondaire ou de l'éducation de base ; voire de l'enseignement supérieure car, l'École normale supérieure de Yaoundé, précisément le Département de Langues et Cultures camerounaises est prêt à recevoir dans ses effectifs des élèves - professeurs de yambetta. Et d'après Nseme et Chumbow (1990 : 168), 'les écoles constituent le lieu par excellence où les normes nouvelles et autres innovations scientifiques s'implantent et se propagent. En se propageant, ces innovations touchent la population qui se voit souvent obligée de les accepter.'

Il importe donc que les dispositions légales en faveur d'un enseignement bilingue/multilingue (Langues officielles et Langues nationales) soient suffisamment reflétées dans les programmes actuels d'éducation formelle et non formelle. L'intellectualisation d'une langue ne saurait se limiter à la recherche terminologique. Si ce travail est mené hors du cadre scolaire, il est vain et appelé à rester dans les tiroirs. La dissémination d'une terminologie conçue in vitro doit passer par le manuel et l'enseignement scolaires.

8. Conclusion

Remettre en cause le projet de l'intellectualisation des langues africaines, c'est remettre en cause la renaissance africaine qui ne saurait s'exprimer que dans des langues étrangères ; c'est remettre en cause le développement de l'Afrique. Il est possible de moderniser n'importe quelle langue locale en vue de son intellectualisation dans un contexte multilingue à l'instar de celui du Cameroun, lorsqu'en termes de politique linguistique, un bon vent souffle en faveur de toutes les langues.

Toutefois, pour que chaque langue franchisse le cap véritable de langue académique ou d'expression de la modernité, c'est un processus qui n'est pas du ressort d'un seul

linguiste, ou d'une volonté politique de *jure*. Les leçons de l'expérience du yambetta nous montrent clairement les variables qui doivent être réunies:

1. Des terminologies doivent être développées dans tous les domaines, qu'ils soient d'usage ou de prestige ;

2. Cette modernisation de la langue doit être orientée vers une appropriation locale des connaissances « nouvelles » (savoirs, savoir-faire);

3. Des manuels thématiques doivent être traduits pour que soit ainsi développée la littérature spécialisée.

4. Les textes d'application des lois librement adoptées par les élus du peuple en faveur de la promotion des langues et cultures nationales doivent exprimer et instaurer clairement une diglossie normée (langue nationale / langue officielle) dans l'éducation.

5. La communauté linguistique concernée doit être redynamisée ; autrement dit, il faut promouvoir une communauté lettrée au-delà du cadre d'éducation formelle.

De telles considérations valent la peine d'être prises en compte si l'on aspire à une intellectualisation effective des langues africaines.

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ⁱⁱAcadémie africaine des Langues.

ⁱⁱⁱExtrait du résumé soumis par M. Diki-Kidiri pour le colloque « Terminologie : approches interdisciplinaires », Gatineau, mai 2007, (Cité par Rousseau 1996).

Moroccans' attitudes towards the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction

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'Pour qu'une personne puisse se sentir à l'aise dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, il est essentiel qu'elle ne soit pas obligée pour y pénétrer, d'abandonner sa langue identitaire.' (Amine Maalouf 1998)

Abstract

With the spread of globalization and the will of Morocco to open up to the world, the Moroccan educational reform is reinforcing the position of global languages such as French and English at the expense of mother tongues - Dajira and Amazigh. On the one hand, though Amazigh has been officially introduced in school since 2003, its teaching is limited to a small number of underprivileged schools and areas.

Moreover, the teachers involved are chosen on a voluntary basis only. They have very little pedagogical background in language teaching as there is still no structured training provided for teaching Amazigh. Many Moroccans are still very sceptical about the value of this language and consider investing in learning it a waste of time and energy. With the reform of the constitution and the officialisation of the Amazigh language, however, the Moroccan state will have to reconsider the place of Amazigh in the educational system and to assign more space and importance to the language.

On the other hand, Darija is still not highly valued because it is associated with orality and informal contexts and is referred to as a corrupt form of Modern Standard Arabic, the language associated with Islam. The general tendency among Moroccans,

including the elites and especially the fervent defenders of the first official language, Modern Standard Arabic, is to reject Darija as the language of instruction. Since the success of any language policy depends on the attitudes of the people who are affected by it, the aim of this paper is to investigate Moroccans' attitudes towards the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction.

The present study is based on exhaustive fieldwork research making use of both qualitative and quantitative research instruments and involving a representative population sample for better understanding of the topic. The results demonstrate that the attitudes towards the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction swing between negative and positive attitudes, and that factors such as mother tongues' status and power, the impact of mother tongues' use on the educational system, and language identity and maintenance account for these attitudes. The study also demonstrates that the use of mother tongues by both the teachers and the students in the Moroccan school context is an undeniable reality, which will force the authorities to give more importance to mother tongues and consider a policy that recognizes them as languages of instruction.

Key Words: *Mother tongues (Darija/Amazigh), language policy, attitudes, language of instruction*

1. Introduction

Morocco is a multilingual country where all Moroccans are exposed to many languages and to different orthographic systems since an early age. At home, the mother tongues can either be Moroccan Arabic or Amazigh. Each one of these languages has different varieties and dialects depending on the speaker's origins. At school, Moroccan students learn Standard Arabic and French until the baccalaureate level. Starting from Mid/high schools, some Moroccan students learn English, Spanish, Italian or German. At the university level, students have a wider choice of foreign languages such as Italian and

Portuguese. Living in a diverse culture with different languages and dialects, being geographically close to Europe, and being a former French and Spanish colony has made Moroccans polyglots.

For instance, a majority of educated Moroccans are either bilinguals or multilinguals, who are able to speak in addition to one and/or two mother tongues, Modern Standard Arabic - the official language of the country and the language of instruction at all levels in the public system- foreign languages such as French, English and/or Spanish, etc.; while the illiterate people are either monolinguals using only one of the mother tongues - Amazigh or Darija- or passive bilinguals.

The rise of globalization has contributed to the diversity and richness of the Moroccan linguistic market. It has paved the way for a new wave of language learning as it has made teaching and learning foreign languages not only a requirement but also a highly valued skill at the social, academic and professional levels.

The spread of globalization and the encouragement of foreign languages have also contributed to the marginalization of mother tongues. The Charter on Educational Reform (2000) clearly prioritizes global languages such as French and English at the expense of Amazigh and Darija. For instance, Amazigh neither enjoys real government support nor does it enjoy positive attitudes from the overall Moroccan population (Errihani 2008, Marley 2004, El Kirat 2004, 2010). Although the Charter recognizes it as a national language, and despite its being recognized as an official language next to Standard Arabic by the new constitution, the Amazigh language policy tends more to be a symbolic attempt to acknowledge a minority group in Morocco rather than a real effort to officialise and maintain the language.

At school, the language is taught in a very archaic way based on intuition and volunteering. The Ministry of Education is hardly taking into consideration the IRCAM's (Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture- Institut Royal de la culture Amazighe) recommendations to improve the Amazigh teaching (Errihani 2008). At the social level, the majority of Moroccans do not

favour the introduction of Amazigh as a language of instruction. Some Amazighs themselves believe that since foreign languages are the only means to guarantee good schooling and careers for their progeny, the Amazigh language will only be another burden for their children at school (El Kirat 2004, 2008b, 2010b). Concerning Darija, it is mentioned nowhere in the Charter on Educational Reform. The strong proponents of Standard Arabic and the elites of the Moroccan society also believe that Darija is a corrupt version of Standard Arabic that should only be confined to everyday communication purposes and the family context.

(Maamouri 2000) argues that the marginalization of mother tongues in the Moroccan school system is one of the major causes of high dropout rates, high illiteracy and low school performance. From a linguistic human rights' perspective, (Skutnabb-Kangas 1999) asserts that the denial of a nation's linguistic resources and the rejection of a child's language in school is a violation of human rights.

The literature provides ample evidence in favour of the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction. Authorities such as UNESCO and experts in first and second language acquisition and in bilingual education all insist that students should start learning through their mother tongues (Daniel and Ball 2010, Cummins 2006). First there is the UNESCO's 1953 document, which asserts that 'instruction in the mother tongue is beneficial for first language competence, achievement in other subject areas, and is a necessary foundation for cognitive development for second language acquisition'. (Cummins 1996, Dutcher and Tucker 1997).

UNESCO also proposes multilingual education, which means using the mother tongue and the national and global languages in education as means to address the needs of culturally and linguistically indigenous communities.

Moyo (2002) and Cummins (2000) argue that the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction reduces the affective filter that the learning of an L2 can cause, and it facilitates learning foreign languages that are the keys to economic development as well as the elitist status that is

connected with the mastery of these languages. The use of mother tongues also guarantees an easy access to information and knowledge for the common people and promotes political unity.

Experience with the Arabisation Policy has proved that the state's strong support and people's attitudes towards the language are key factors for the success of any language policy, as well as for the status, maintenance and vitality of any language (Errihani 2006, El Kirat 2004). The experience has also demonstrated that a successful policy is one, which aims at changing people's beliefs and attitudes, and enhancing 'national identity and economic wellbeing' as both (Paulson 1994) and (Wright 2004) assert. Accordingly, it is worth investigating the people's attitudes towards the use of their mother tongues as languages of instruction so as to ultimately prepare the ground for an eventual implementation of an educational policy that will admit the value of mother tongues as languages of instruction.

Therefore, the present paper aims to investigate Moroccans' attitudes towards the use of Darija and Amazigh as languages of instruction at least in the first years of schooling. The paper tries to examine the motives behind these attitudes and to check the extent to which they either support or reject the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction, and thus the extent to which an educational policy that recognizes mother tongues as languages of instruction is possible in Morocco. The main hypothesis underlying the present study stipulates that Moroccans are not in favour of the use of their mother tongues as languages of instruction because they are not valued in the Moroccan language policy and the Moroccan society and because they are oral languages which are perceived as 'dialects' that cannot compete with the other prestigious languages on the Moroccan linguistic market.

The present study addresses and attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a. What is the Moroccan educational policy and what position, if any, does it assign to mother tongues?

- b. To what extent are mother tongues used in the school context? And what are some of the motives behind this use?
- c. What are Moroccans' attitudes towards the main introduction of Darija and Amazigh as the languages of instruction in the first years of schooling?
- d. What are the motivating factors for such attitudes?

The answers to all these questions will shed light on the Moroccan educational policy, reveal Moroccans' attitudes towards their mother tongues, and draw some recommendations in support of the recognition of mother tongues as languages of instruction.

2. Research design

The present research is exploratory and is based on exhaustive fieldwork making use of different but complementary research instruments. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures were used to crosscheck the findings and ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings. The questionnaire includes forced choice questions and scales. The questions elicit the attitudes towards the use of Mother Tongues as languages of instruction, as well as the extent to which mother tongues are already being non-officially used in the school context and the motives behind their use. The questionnaire was administered to 132 respondents, who are students at Mohammed V University-Faculty of Humanities-Rabat. The students are from the English department. Seven of the respondents are teachers who are involved in different levels of education (primary level, secondary level, and high school level).

The interview concerned ten respondents. Six respondents were teachers, three of them are teaching in high schools in Salé. The names of those high schools are: Hassan II, El Fakih El Marini, and Ettaib Al Alaoui. One of the teachers works at the university level; while the other two are secondary school teachers at Al Mobadara School in Salé. The other four respondents were students from the English department.

The third data collection procedure is participant and non-participant classroom observation. Classes of different subjects and pupils and students at the primary level, the secondary level and the high school level were observed in order to check the extent to which mother tongues are used, and how beneficial their use is for the students' learning process. The table below illustrates the schools involved in the study, the levels, and the classes observed.

Level	Schools	Classes and subjects
Primary level	Abdurrahman El kattani-Salé	1 Arabic class
High school level	Mohammed Allama Sbihi-Salé	4 classes: History and Geography, Philosophy, Islamic education, and Mathematics
Secondary school level	Almobadara-Salé	English class

Table 20.1: Schools and levels involved in the study

At the level of the secondary school, an experiment was conducted with the help of the teacher in order to observe the extent to which the students favour the use of their Mother Tongue – Darijaⁱ, and the extent to which its use can facilitate the learning process for them. The researchers agreed with the teacher to split the one hour English session into two parts. The first 30 minutes were exclusively taught in English, while the rest of the session was taught in Darija. At the end of the session, the students were interviewed in order to examine their opinions towards the two experiences.

The population sample is quite representative as it targets the people who are most affected by the school system. All the present-day university students have experienced the Arabisation process and the multiple reforms of the education system. They are very aware of the consequences of both systems. The pupils and secondary and high school students observed in the study have also experienced different language

policies and new reforms. The teachers are the implementers of the reforms and the agents whose opinions and attitudes are very important for the success of any language policy.

The results of the study are analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The numerical data collected through the questionnaire was processed via the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). It provides frequencies and percentages of the respondents' choices.

The interview data and class observation are analysed qualitatively. The respondents' opinions are quoted in the form of testimonies. The data collected during class observation is used to support the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data.

3. Degree and motives of mother tongues use in instruction

The study revealed that the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction is a reality as one of the respondents declared "Mother tongues are already used in schools". Darija, in particular, has been reported as the most widely used mother tongue and language in the school context. It is the language often used in classes where Standard Arabic is supposed to be the language of instruction. One of the respondents said, "Darija is already used as a language of instruction though it is not officially recognized". Another one also stated "I think that Darija is highly used anyway in all courses and at all levels that are supposed to be taught in Standard Arabic".

The numerical findings also confirm the previous statements. For instance, the total rate of the respondents who admit the use of mother tongue in class is more or less equal to the percentage of those who deny its use, with about 60% of the respondents reporting the teachers' use of Darija for 40% who admit its use. The figures for the students' use of Darija are very revealing with about 62% admitting its use and only 38% denying it. Figures 20.1 and 20.2 illustrate these findings:

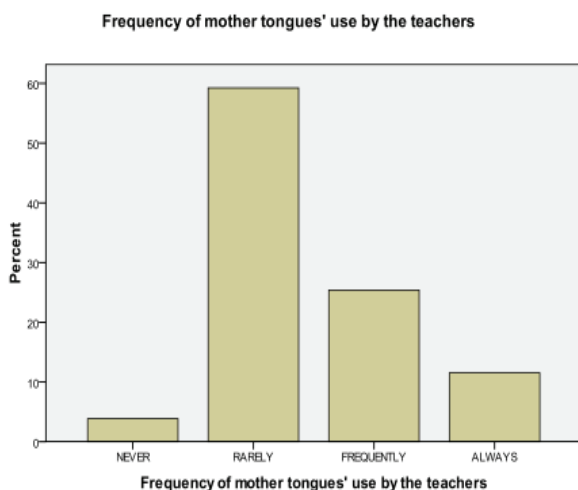


Figure 20.1: Frequency of MT use by the teachers

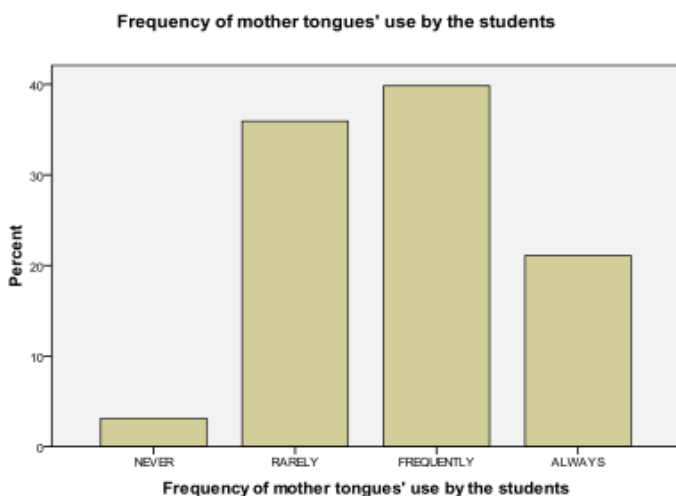


Figure 20.2: frequency of MT use by the students

A close analysis of the above charts reveals that the students' use of mother tongues exceeds the teachers'. This is due to the fact that the data was collected mainly at the university level and in the English department specifically, where English is the language of instruction. Table 20.2

illustrates the teachers’ motives of mother tongue use in instruction.

The teachers’ motives for mother tongue use in instruction	The percentages
The facilitation of the teaching process	70%
Disciplinary purposes	46%
The students’ lack of proficiency in languages	55%
The common mother tongues of most Moroccans	70%
Reluctance to participate	36%
Methodology issues	26 %

Table 20.2: Teachers’ motives for mother tongue use in instruction

Among the reasons teachers provide for the use of mother tongues there is the facilitation of the teaching process. Indeed, 70% of the teachers use Darija to guarantee understanding for students. 70% of the respondents report that Darija is used in the classroom context because it is the language that most if not all Moroccans understand and speak. Classroom observation revealed the use of Darija as the main language of instruction in subjects such as Mathematics, Geography, History and Philosophy. In all these classes, both students and teachers overwhelmingly used Darija with some code mixing, especially for the specialized jargon of the field. In order to justify the use of Darija instead of Standard Arabic, high school teachers reported that the students feel at ease and understand better when they are taught in their mother tongue.

The students’ language proficiency also accounts for the teachers’ use of Darija. 55% of the respondents stated that the students’ lack of proficiency in the official languages of instruction, i.e. Modern Standard Arabic and French, forces teachers to resort to Darija.

According to one of the classes observed in the study, Darija was used in order to overcome the students’ low proficiency in the language of instruction. In this class, the primary school teacher used Darija during a Standard Arabic class to introduce

and explain the course content, and provide the instructions. When the teacher was asked to justify his deed, he claimed that ‘nobody will understand. Even in French classes, most of the teachers explain in Darija.’ (Belghiti’s 2010) study on the attitudes towards the use of Darija in English classes at the university level revealed that the students’ proficiency in the languages, in general, is the main factor that motivates the use of mother tongues. In language courses in particular, the issue is more prevalent as the teachers toil away in classes with students who have different levels of language proficiency.

Other motives for the use of mother tongues concern the teachers’ ignorance of teaching methods as 26% of the respondents reported. 36% of the respondents also declared that the teachers use mother tongue as a means to encourage the students’ participation. Factors such as lack of pedagogical training and experience, and inappropriate course preparation can also account for the use of Darija as language of instruction. The students’ lack of mastery in the language of instruction can account for their reluctance to participate in class. One of the respondents declared that “I usually use it in order to encourage the students’ to participate”.

As far as the students are concerned, Table 20.3 illustrates their motives behind the use of mother tongues in instruction.

The students’ motives for mother tongue use in instruction	Percentages
To chat with classmates	91%
To ask classmates about something they do not understand	83%
To express themselves when they fail to do so in another language	78%
To deal with the school administrative work	63%
To prepare for exams	30%
To revise lessons	28%
To ask teachers about something they do not understand	26%

Table 20.3: Students’ motives for mother tongue use in instruction

91% of the respondents reported that mother tongues are widely used for chatting among peers inside the classroom. Checking understanding is another motive for using mother tongues in the classroom context. 83% of the respondents declared that they use mother tongues in order to inquire about something they do not understand, while 26% of the respondents said they use mother tongues in order to address their teachers when they fail to understand something. The fact of sharing the same mother tongue can reduce the affective filter among students, and make them feel more comfortable approaching and asking their peers rather than their teachers. The use of mother tongues when addressing teachers is more common among primary level and mid/high level school students than among university students especially in the language classes.

The analysis revealed that the mother tongue is also used when the students fail to express themselves in other languages as a result of lack of proficiency. 78% of the respondents claimed this while 63% of them declared that they use the mother tongue for administrative purposes.

It is worth mentioning that 30% of the respondents indicated that they use the mother tongue when preparing for exams and that 28% of them reported that they use it when revising their lessons. The mother tongue in these cases is used as a learning strategy that the students resort to either to learn their lessons by heart, or to achieve a better understanding of the lessons through self-teaching/explaining the content in a more familiar and accessible linguistic code.

4. Mother tongues use as languages of instruction

Although the study shows divergent attitudes towards the use of Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction, the overwhelming majority of the respondents do not approve of the use of Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction as the Figure below illustrates:

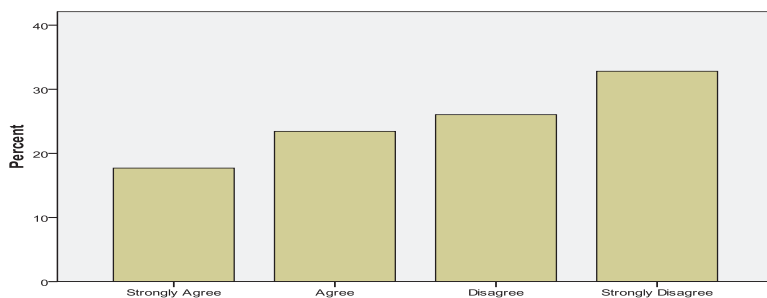


Figure 20.3: Attitudes towards the use of Darija and Amazigh as languages of instruction

The main arguments levelled against the use of Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction concern the status and power of mother tongues in Morocco, the negative impact they may have on the education system in general and on the acquisition of other languages in particular, the utility of mother tongues, and the analogy Moroccans in general establish between the failure of the Arabization policy and the expected doomed failure of mother tongues as languages of instruction.

The sub-sections below report both the positive and negative attitudes towards the use of mother tongues in schools. The focus is not on the type of attitudes, negative and/or positive attitudes, but rather on the motivating factors for such attitudes. They do not only reveal the low status of mother tongues and their values but also the stereotypes associated with them and the social representations people hold about them.

a. The status of mother tongues

The results of the study showed that both Darija and Amazigh are generally perceived as '*lahja*' i.e. dialects that are only spoken by non-educated people, and that should be limited to daily life and informal domains. The results also showed that there is a strong denial of the status of both Darija and Amazigh as mother tongues, and even their nature as

languages. One of the respondents declared that '*Classical Arabic should be our mother tongue!*' Another respondent declared: "It [Darija] is not even a language, I consider it a dialect spoken by the majority of non-educated people...and I strongly disagree with the idea of promoting these languages. They're just dialects and we use them in our daily life".

The study also revealed that mother tongues are perceived as dialects that do not have the power and status of Standard Arabic or French. For instance, one of the respondents indicated, "mother tongues are not languages that have the same power as that of Arabic or French".

As far as French is concerned, it is generally perceived as the language of the elite and the educated people and it is viewed as the means that ensures good education and promising professional careers. The power and status of French is also strengthened by the role that the language has at the economic and political levels.

Language power and status in Morocco is not determined only by how strong the language is at the economic and political levels. Religion also plays a very important role in the value a language can have. Modern Standard Arabic, for instance, is highly valued because it is the language of Quran. Indeed, the use of mother tongues is perceived as a detrimental threat to the language of the Holy book, which symbolizes the faith of all Moroccans, as one of the respondents indicated "The use of Darija/Amazigh will end up killing Standard Arabic which is the language of the Quran".

Such perceptions promote the negative attitudes towards the use of Darija and Amazigh as the languages of instruction. The two languages do, in fact, rank as the least prestigious languages (El Kirat 2004, 2007) on the Moroccan linguistic market. The majority of the respondents believe that they should only be used in everyday communication, and that they should not be recognized as languages of instruction by the constitution. This is shown in Figure 20.4 below.

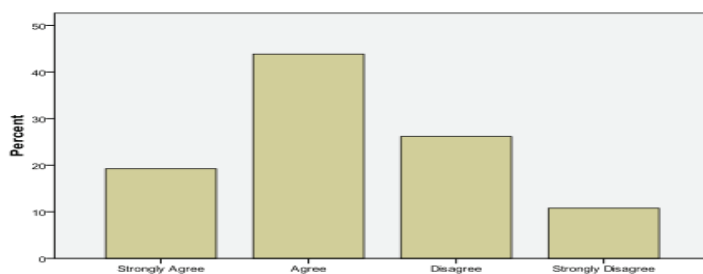


Figure 20.4: Attitudes towards the recognition of Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction by the constitution

The non-codification and standardization of Darija, and the fact that it is not officially recognized by the state can, to some extent, explain why it is perceived as a dialect that can only be “spoken at home and in streets” according to one of the respondents. Edward (1994) argues that the nature of attitudes towards languages is mainly conditioned by the issue of ‘standardization’ and the degree of vitality of the language. Indeed, a standard language, which is officially recognized by the state and codified, gets more value. The vitality of a language depends on its functions and roles in the society (El Kirat et al. 2010:346).

The Amazigh language is a good case in point. Although the language is recognized as the second official language in Morocco and is being standardized and codified, it is still not perceived as a language, and is referred to as a ‘lahja’ dialect. A majority of Moroccans have negative attitudes towards Amazigh and question its status and utility. Some of the Amazigh native speakers also believe that passing on their mother tongue to their offspring is of no value and consider investing in learning it a waste of time and energy (El Kirat 2004, 2007, 2009, 2010).

b. Mother tongues’ hindrance in education

The present investigation revealed that there is a widely spread view that the use of mother tongues as languages of

instruction will cause more problems to the Moroccan education system. This clearly appears in the Figure below:

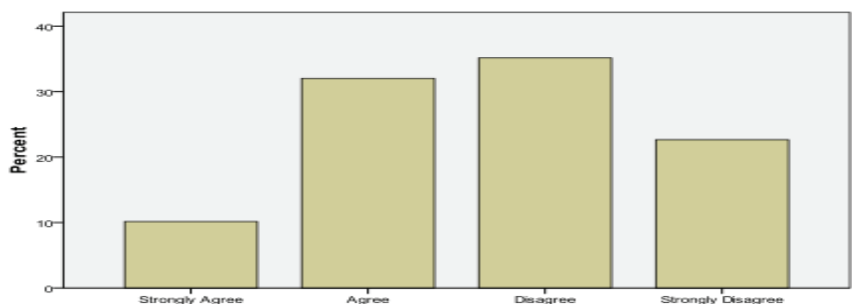


Figure 20. 4: Attitudes towards the impact of mother tongues on the education system

A close analysis of the findings reveals three major issues which are related to (i)

The students’ performance at school and the extent to which the use of mother tongues can affect it; (ii) the impact of the use of mother tongues on the process of acquiring other languages especially foreign ones, and (iii) the utility of mother tongues and how they can guarantee access to privileged schools and limited access institutes and universities and the job market. The following sections discuss and analyse the findings related to each of the issues listed above.

c. Mother tongues and students’ low performance

Among the main recurrent arguments for opposing the use of the mother tongue as the language of instruction, there is the belief that it does not help the students to perform well at school. The majority of the respondents in the study reported that the use of Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction ‘... will not help students perform well at schools.’ This is supported by the Figure below.

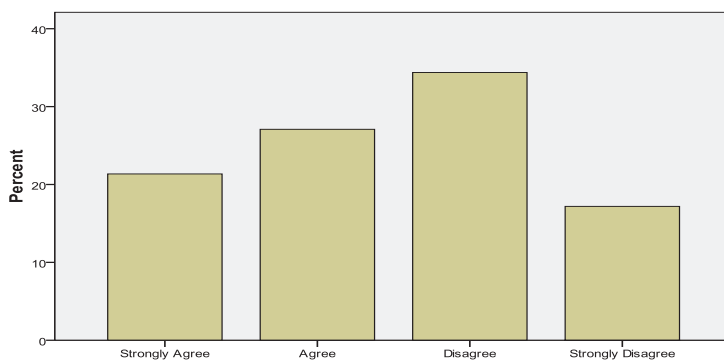


Figure 20.5: Attitudes towards the impact of mother tongue on the students' performance

The main argument opponents of the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction use to defend their position is the analogy they draw between the performance in school and the use of mother tongues. They assert that the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction will create tremendous issues with respect to syllabus design especially that all the available teaching manuals are written either in Standard Arabic or French. They claim that these issues will get even worse due to the fact that no pedagogical training is available for Darija and/or Amazigh teaching. One of the respondents declared that "The use of Darija or Amazigh means that we have to forget everything that has been done so far with respect to the teaching manuals, and how we teach them. We will have to start from scratch....that is impossible".

However, the 28 % of the respondents who agreed with the use of Darija/Amazigh and with the fact that it would help the students perform better at school asserted that mother tongue use can facilitate learning in general. This appears in the respondent's testimony quoted below:

I think that the use of Amazigh and Darija as languages of instruction will enhance the students' understanding of issues that they may find difficult in the other languages. It is obvious that people understand their mother tongues better than any other languages.

The respondents, who share this view, believe that the investment in mother tongues and their use as languages of instruction creates a wider knowledge base that is easily accessed by the general population even in fields such as science, which can eventually promote the country's development. One of the respondents stated that 'the use of mother tongues such as Amazigh and Darija will help our country to develop in sciences and all the other fields'.

The literature about the issue provides ample evidence supporting the educational advantages of the use of mother tongues as languages of education. Harbord (1992), for example, argues that mother tongues could enhance the students' self-learning ability and confidence, and help them achieve better learning outcomes. Setati and (Adler 2000) also assert that the use of mother tongues can boost the students' self-confidence and enhance their performance at school. In the Moroccan context, in particular, (Maamouri 2000) affirms that the acknowledgment of mother tongues in the Moroccan school system can help decrease high dropout rates, illiteracy and weak school performance.

d. Mother tongues and proficiency in languages classes

The study revealed that the attitudes towards the use of Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction are motivated by the extent to which they are believed to either help or hinder the acquisition of the other languages. Some of the problems that the use of mother tongues can create in language classes concern the hindrance to the learning of a good proficiency in the target languages. The teaching of a foreign language through the medium of mother tongue can be a real obstacle to the development of proficiency in the language taught. One of the respondents angrily declared: "For God sake, adopting Darija as the language of instruction will make things worse. Nowadays, we see that the students spend their whole life studying Standard Arabic, but still they are so bad at it". Another respondent claimed that "Learners would be lazy and they would lose interest in foreign languages".

The strong proponents of language emersion classes argue against the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction claiming that the use of a language other than the language being taught inside the classroom can seriously impede the acquisition of the foreign language. One of the respondents who is a high school teacher of English declared that the students “would depend greatly on the 1st language to the extent that they might confuse the syntactic structure of the 1st and 2nd languages”. Another respondent insisted that “students’ continuous use of mother tongues in class affects the learning of other languages”.

Indeed, Selinker (1992) claims that excessive reliance on the mother tongue will result in the fossilisation of an inter-language or more particularly in negative transfer. The later refers to the negative influence the knowledge of the first language has in the learning of the target language due to the differences between both languages mainly at the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic levels.

A few respondents in the study referred to the issue of lack of input in foreign languages and how it hinders the language acquisition process. A high school teacher of French asserted that: “There is no way for students to perform better in French if I am using Tarifit. I should insist on the use of French. I am a French teacher and I want my students to be able to express themselves and write in French”.

The same teacher insisted on maximizing the use of the target language and using comprehension checks until the students understand. He observed, “I personally don’t use Tarifit to explain lessons ...I try to elaborate and give examples in the same language that I am using till they get the meaning”. Ellis (1985) argues that the use of the mother tongue wastes too much valuable class time that would be better spent on the target language. He believes that when teachers use the students’ mother tongue for regular classroom management, they deprive the learners of valuable input in the L2. Chaudron (1988:30) also supports this view, stating that, ‘In the typical foreign language classroom ...the fullest competence in the Target Language is achieved by means of the teacher providing

a rich target Language environment, in which not only instruction and drill are executed in the Target Language, but also disciplinary and management operations.'

The few proponents of mother tongues use in language classes, however, reported different counterarguments. One of the respondents asserted that "the use of mother tongues as a means of teaching and learning facilitates the learning of other languages". Authorities such as UNESCO, as well as the experts in 1st and 2nd language acquisition and experts in bilingual education also believe that mother tongue use has linguistic advantages as it facilitates L2 and L3 learning (Daniel and Ball 2010, Cummins 2006, Moyo 2002). The experiment that was conducted in the present study in an English class in a secondary school accounts for this as it demonstrates the facilitating role of mother tongues in the acquisition of L2.

For instance, during the first 30 minutes of the class, all taught in English, the students were not motivated, they did not participate, and they gave answers in Moroccan Arabic. However, during the last 30 minutes, which was taught in both Moroccan Arabic and English, the students were more active, and they demonstrated a better understanding of the lesson.

e. Utility of mother tongues

The issue of the utility of mother tongues in the education system in general, and in the professional field in particular raises the concern about the benefits and the advantages that their use as languages of instruction can have on the students' future and careers. One of the respondents declared that "the aim of teaching languages is to enable students to have access to different job opportunities, and mother tongues do not guarantee this". The same respondent added that "learning our native languages is not of any value". The Figure below reveals that the majority of the respondents believe that mother tongues will be only a handicap to access privileged schools as well as the job market.

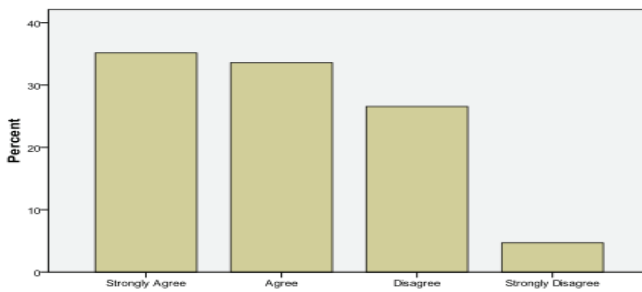


Figure 20.6: Impact of mother tongues on the access to privileged schools and the job market

Access to limited access colleges and high institutes, and access to the job market requires a high level of proficiency in foreign languages, especially English and French. This is a fact that the Charter on Educational Reform (2000) implicitly highlights at the expense of the Moroccan national language-Standard Arabic. Although the Charter still acknowledges Standard Arabic as the national and official language, and although it still insists on its being learned and taught appropriately, the Charter implicitly reports that the Arabization Policy has failed (Berdouzi 2000). While the Charter focuses on the fact that the Arabization of science and technology can only produce academic and socio-economic handicaps, it encourages the teaching and learning of sciences and technology in more appropriate languages, especially French and English, commonly used at the university level.

In addition to this, when it comes to attitudes towards Standard Arabic, the majority prefers learning French over Standard Arabic as Marley's (2004) study revealed. The respondents in the study agreed on the fact that Standard Arabic is not useful in order to access the job market or high institutes with limited access. The respondents do not perceive Standard Arabic as their national language, and in some cases they confuse it with their mother tongue Darija.

The lack of support from the Moroccan government and the negative attitudes towards the Arabization policy have all contributed to its failure, and to making many Moroccans question not only the Arabization policy, but also the utility of Standard Arabic in the country. The failure of the Arabization

policy also raises scepticism towards the use and the utility of mother tongues as languages of instruction. It makes people believe that a language policy that recognizes mother tongues as languages of instruction is doomed to failure just like the Arabization policy. One of the respondents stated “I think that a language policy that recognizes Darija/Amazigh as languages of instruction will have the same fate as the Arabization policy”. Another respondent also declared: “Standard Arabic which is the supposedly official language of Morocco has failed, so I do not see what Darija and Amazigh can offer, which will be better...they are of no utility for them, so they will surely fail”.

f. Mother tongues at the primary school level

It is of relevance at this stage to emphasize the fact that mother tongues are not the languages of instruction in Morocco. Indeed, Darija is still excluded from school. Amazigh, a minority language, got introduced in school in 2003 as a subject only at a very limited number of schools. One of the main objectives of this study is to address the issue of introducing mother tongues as the languages of instruction during the first years of schooling so as to make the passage from home to school less traumatizing for children. Questions directly related to the issue were included in the questionnaire. The results prove that the majority of the respondents do not support the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction at the primary level mainly because they value Modern Standard Arabic and directly associate it with Islam. Figure 8 below illustrates this.

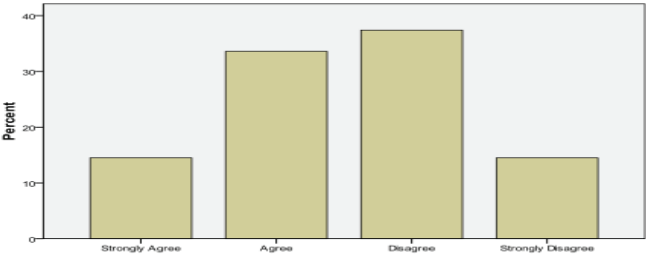


Figure 20.7: Attitudes towards the use of mother tongues at the primary level

The respondents who were against the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction believe that Darija and Amazigh are detrimental to Standard Arabic, and that they will create a linguistic chaos as one of the respondents said “The use of Darija or Amazigh will result in a linguistic chaos and will kill Standard Arabic”. Other respondents who acknowledged the benefits of using mother tongues still did not support their overuse inside the classroom and stressed on the teachers’ role to “force the students to understand other languages” as one of the respondents affirmed.

As far as the respondents who expressed their support towards the use of Darija and Amazigh at the primary level, they asserted that mother tongues can decrease the kids’ frustration of dealing with completely different languages, and can facilitate learning in general. One of the respondents declared that “Mother tongues will be useful with kids as they will decrease the level of anxiety and frustration that they feel when they start learning languages that are completely different from their L1”.

McKenzie-Brown (2006) asserts that the fact that both the teachers and the students share the same common mother tongue should be considered as an asset rather than an impediment. Moreover, according to Butzkamm (2003), the exclusion of mother tongue would deprive teachers and students of one of the best resources that can facilitate making associations with skills and knowledge acquired in and through the L1.

5. Language identity and language maintenance

The issues of language identity and language maintenance are addressed here because most of the respondents have considered the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction as a threat to the official language of the country, Modern Standard Arabic, a highly valued language which as is directly associated with Islam and the Quran. A hot debate is currently at issue on the political and social scene concerning

the use of Darija, the most widely used language and the lingua franca of Morocco, as a language of instruction.

Many respondents who support mother tongue education established a direct link between the mother tongue and the individual's identity and culture and asserted that the use of Darija and Amazigh as languages of instruction has a cultural impact and enhances the respect of the native speakers' language and identity, as one of the respondents declared "It is a good policy....our mother tongues should be preserved and so should our culture and identity".

However, the respondents who opposed the implementation of a policy supporting the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction are strong supporters of the Arabization policy. Given the colonial history of Morocco and the exclusion of its official language, Classical Arabic, the imposition of French as the main language of the state, and the linguistic and cultural assimilation many Moroccans have undergone, especially among the elite, the use of Modern Standard Arabic, i.e. the official language of the country, is perceived as a means for valorising the national identity and a symbol of linguistic and cultural independence. For instance, one of the respondents declared that: "It [Arabization policy] is a very important process which gives priority to Arabic. Arabic is the language of the holy Quran and of literature. Therefore, it must be the language of education."

Another respondent also stated that: "It [Arabization policy] is necessary as a language policy. We live in an Arab country and we cannot do without Arabic... the language reflects our culture and tradition"

The respondents believe that more attention should be devoted to the maintenance of Standard Arabic as it is the language that represents religion and the culture and identity of Moroccans. Supporters of Modern Standard Arabic go as far as to claim that it is the mother tongue of Moroccans and all Arabs. This fact is actually not true, for the language is learnt at school through instruction. It is also used only in the formal domains, i.e. school, administration, media, etc.

6. Mother tongue education: Implications

Although the findings reveal that Moroccans' attitudes towards the use of Darija and Amazigh as languages of instruction swing between positive and negative attitudes, the majority of respondents still believe that there is no place for mother tongues in the Moroccan school system.

A deep analysis of the Moroccan linguistic situation reveals that these attitudes are influenced by three main factors. First among them is the low status and lack of power mother tongues have on the linguistic market. Both Darija and Amazigh are mainly perceived as oral 'dialects' and home languages that are used only for everyday communications and that cannot be used in education and compete with the other languages in use. The second factor has to do with the widely spread belief that mother tongues will hinder the students' performance and acquisition of foreign languages. Reference can be made above all to the questioned utility of mother tongues for the students' academic and professional success. The last factor concerns the extent to which the use of mother tongues is perceived as a threat to Modern Standard Arabic, the official language of the country. Supporters of the Arabization process and of Modern Standard Arabic claim that it is the mother tongue of Moroccans and all Arabs.

Before considering the implementation of a language policy adopting both Darija and Amazigh as languages of instruction, it would be of relevance to take into consideration the basic requirements that guarantee the success of language policies as one of the respondents declared: "The implementation of mother tongues as means of instruction requires time, money, and more importantly raising the people's awareness of the advantages to gain from their use". The process requires the government to enhance the vitality of both Darija and Amazigh, and promote the positive attitudes towards them and awareness of the advantages of using them as languages of instruction. The enhanced utility of the language in the academia and at the professional level can increase the

population's acceptance of the use of mother tongues within the school system.

The process should also require taking important measures with respect to pedagogical training. It is very important to equip the teachers with the tools and techniques that are necessary for teaching through Darija and Amazigh, and for designing materials that incorporate these languages. Moreover, since the teachers are the implementers of the reforms in the school system and the agents whose opinions and attitudes are very important for the success of any language policy, they should be knowledgeable of the linguistic, educational and cultural advantages the use of mother tongues as mediums of instruction offer. Given the fact that the two languages have been mainly oralⁱⁱ with no written heritage, there is also a need for their standardization given the geographical and social variation associated with them. As far as Amazigh is concerned, although the new Moroccan constitution officially recognizes the language as the second official language, the implementation of the officialization of the language is still a real issue due to fact that the language has still not been standardized. Indeed, the Amazigh language policy in Morocco is perceived as a symbolic attempt to acknowledge an ethnic minority language and identity which was excluded and marginalized for decades rather than a real effort and will to acknowledge and promote the status of the language.

In addition to the provision of pedagogical training and the enhancement of mother tongues utility and vitality, the government should set a real vision, strategic plan and clear objectives for mother tongue language policy. Only a real political will of the Moroccan authorities will develop awareness of the value of mother tongues and change the negative attitudes of people who are still sceptical of the value of mother tongues education.

For the sake of fairness and in order not to reproduce social injustice the Amazighs have suffered from for decades, Darija should also be recognized as an official language and should get standardized. This may sound unreasonable to so many

Moroccans and the Moroccan authorities in particular given the role of Modern Standard Arabic, its association with Islam and the unity of Morocco and the bond with the Arab Muslim world. Yet, a careful consideration of the matter reveals that the use of mother tongues, Darija and Amazigh, will surely help Morocco reduce not only the school dropouts but also the illiteracy rates and social injustice. So many Moroccans are not enjoying their rights and are living at the margin of society out of ignorance and due to the linguistic issues.

The study has revealed as some earlier research done before (cf. Belghiti 2010, El Kirat et al. 2010) that Darija is already being unofficially used in the school context at all the levels of education. The persistence in the denial and rejection of its use as the language of instruction will not change the reality of the teaching practices in Moroccan schools. An official implementation of the mother tongue education will help to improve the quality of teaching and the education system. This will also make the teachers feel more at ease when using mother tongues and be more creative and innovative in their teaching.

7. Conclusion

With the spread of global languages and cultures, the Moroccan authorities are reinforcing the position of global languages such as French and English at the expense of mother tongues. This is what encourages the Moroccans' negative attitudes towards the national languages and mother tongues. The introduction of mother tongues in the Moroccan school system will reduce the high rates of dropout and illiteracy and improve the low school performance of the children from low socio-economic status and underprivileged areas. From a linguistic human rights' perspective, the denial of a nation's linguistic resources and the rejection of a child's language in school is a violation of human rights. Instruction in the mother tongue is beneficial for first language competence, the achievement in other subject areas, and is an essential basis for the cognitive development for second language acquisition. Multilingual education, which involves the use of the mother

tongue and the national and global languages in education, can be a means for eradicating social injustice and satisfying the needs of cultural and linguistic indigenous communities.

Morocco's experience with the Arabization Policy has proved that the state's strong support and the community's attitudes towards the language are the key factors for guaranteeing the success of any language policy, as well as for improving the status of any language. The experience has also demonstrated that a successful policy is one, which aims at changing people's beliefs and attitudes, and enhancing 'national identity and economic wellbeing'. It is legitimate to use L1 as a means to maintain the students' L1 and culture even if it may appear not to be desirable to teach only in the target language because the denial of the native languages and the cultures they represent may increase the gap between 'existing unequal power balances and may create other socio-cultural divisions such as ethnocentricity and xenophobia' (Hawks 2001).

As Amine Maalouf expresses it so well in the citation quoted above, the introduction of mother tongues at school can help promote positive attitudes towards them and make Moroccans feel more at ease with their native languages. Time will eventually convince those who oppose the use of Darija and Amazigh in the school system to become more tolerant and accept it. Human beings by nature resist changes but end up getting used to the new situation.

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ⁱ See Yearous (2012), especially page 2.

ⁱⁱ It should be noted here that in 2003 Amazigh was introduced at school as a subject and the Tifinagh script has been adopted for its writing. Amazigh has also been established as the second official language of the country in July 2011. This has not changed much to the status of the language so far.

This book is a composite of 40 purely scientific and peer-reviewed papers presented during the Seventh World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL7) at the University of Buea, Cameroon, in 2012. The different chapters of the volume fall within the scope of African languages in relation to linguistics and other related disciplines, where a varied range of theoretical examinations, investigations and/or discussions as well as pure description of aspects of language are offered. For the purpose of clarity and easy accessibility of the content, the chapters are further subcategorized into nine sections, which include: Borrowing, Discourse Analysis, Historical Linguistics, Intercultural Communication, Language Documentation, Language in Education, Morpho-syntax, Phonetics and Phonology, and Sociolinguistics.

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